ARUṆOPANIṢAT

(of the Śrīvidyā Tradition)

Translated and Annotated
by
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Published by

SRIVIDYA EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY (Regd.)
(Srividyalayam Matriculation Higher Secondary School Campus)
S.S. Colony, MADURAI-625 016.

Price :

1990
Printed in India at
Rainbow Printers, Madurai-1



तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ।

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

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SRIVIDYA EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY

Preface

I have great pleasure in presenting before my esteemed readers this study on Aruṇopaniṣat. Many academic and spiritual facts relating to the study of Aruṇopaniṣat are discussed in the Introduction (pp. IX-XXX and in Part 3 (pp. 51-188).

Although the Sanskrit text of Aruṇopaniṣat has been printed many times, this is the first time the Upaniṣat is translated and annotated elaborately.

My student Dr. Douglas R. Brooks who is an internationally recognised and respected authority on many World Religions especially Hinduism and Śrīvidyā, and who is now teaching in the University of Rochester, USA, used to come to India for studying with me many rare Śrīvidyā and other texts.

Recently when Dr. Douglas R. Brooks was in India I taught him Aruṇopaniṣat. While I was teaching him Aruṇopaniṣat I conceived the idea of using the materials by incorporating them in a book so that many general students of Indian religion may be benefitted by it.

This book, therefore, contains the results of our hour-long discussions and dialogues on Aruṇopaniṣat.

Dr. Douglas R. Brooks is responsible in many ways for this book to see the light of the day.

It is my pleasant duty to thank Srividya Educational Society for coming forward to publish this book. The entire proceeds of this book will go to Srividya Educational Society for being utilised to publish many other books of this type in the coming years.

In spite of my personal care, some spelling and other mistakes have crept in. I request my distinguished

readers to have them corrected whenever they come across such mistakes.

My daughter Chitra (Śrīvidya) Vijayakumar patiently and carefully went through the proofs to the best of her abilities. In spite of the fact that she was completely pre occupied with her new-born baby-boy Master Kiran Vijayakumar, she corrected the proofs but I do not propose to embarrass her by thanking her.

My University authorities deserve my grateful thanks for providing me an ideal atmosphere to bring out such books.

Even though now-a-days the Śrīvidya is more popular it is a sad fact that genuine authorities are becoming less and less to teach and interpret this most powerful and useful tradition of Śrīvidya. The fact that Aruṇopaniṣat remained without a modern commentary or exposition for a long time would prove that competent authorities are slowly disappearing.

In this context I proudly recall the valuable help which Dr. Douglas R. Brooks is rendering to the study of Śrīvidya at the international level.

I thank Rev. Robinson Levi, Director, People's Educational Trust and Rainbow Printers, Madurai for taking a personal care in printing the book. The whole-hearted co-operation extended to me by the entire printing staff of the Press is worth mentioning here.

Before concluding this Preface it is necessary to notify an important correction as follows:

The 12th line on p. 35 and the 3rd line on p. 154 should read as 'the Śrīcakra is NOT different from this.......'

tasmai śrīgurave namaḥ

Madurai-16
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Dr. G. SUNDARAMOORTHY

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INTRODUCTION

The 'smaller' and 'bigger' versions of Aruṇopaniṣat

The Aruṇopaniṣat which is presented in the hands of our readers with the original Sanskrit Text, English translation and elaborate exposition for the first time, is considered to be one of the most important Upaniṣads of the Śrīvidyā tradition, the other Upaniṣads being Tripuropaniṣat and Bhāvanopaniṣat.

In Section 2 of this book we may notice that the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat helps us by a description to identify the Aruṇopaniṣat.

First he says that the Aruṇopaniṣat begins with the mantra 'imā nu kam bhuvanā...' and ends with the mantra 'ṛṣibhīradāt...'

Then immediately the commentator says that the Aruṇopaniṣat begins with the mantra 'bhadram karṇebhiḥ...' and ends with the mantra 'tapasvī puṇyo bhavati'.

These two descriptions about the same Upaniṣat may confuse the readers as the beginning mantras and the ending mantras are differently mentioned.

Therefore it becomes our duty to offer a suitable explanation on this point.

In this connection the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka (T.A.) may have to be drawn here for discussing certain facts. The T.A. which is one of the significant and popular Vedic texts, contains in its 27th Anuvāka of the First Prapāṭhaka a set of mantras starting with the mantra 'imā nu kam...'

and ending with the mantra 'ṛṣibhīradạt....'. Therefore it is clear that the above mentioned first description of the commentator exactly fits in with the mantras of the 27th Anuvạka.

The same T.A. contains also another set of mantras beginning from 'bhadram karṇebhiḥ...' and ending with the mantra 'tapasvī puṇyo bhavati'. Hence this portion of the T.A. exactly fits in with the second description of the commentator.

This second set of mantras is spread over from the beginning of the T.A. and upto the end of 32nd Anuvāka of the First Prapāṭhaka of T.A.

It may thus be noted that the second set of mantras which is spread over the entire 32 Anuvạkas of the First Prapạṭhaka contains in itself the first set of mantras which is confined only to the 27th Anuvạka.

If we now go back to analyse the two apparently contradictory descriptions given by the commentator about the Aruṇopaniṣat, we may discover that the Aruṇopaniṣat is another name given to all the Anuvạkas of the First Prapạṭhaka of the T.A. But for some reasons the 27th Anuvạka alone is also distinctly designated as Aruṇopaniṣat in the Śrīvidyạ tradition.

From this it is clear that what the general Vedic tradition considers to be a portion of the T.A. is redesignated by the Śrīvidyạ tradition as Aruṇopaniṣat.

For the avoidance of any probable confusion we may safely refer to the two sets of Aruṇopaniṣadic mantras as containing 'Two Versions'.

The Aruṇopaniṣat which includes one set of mantras starting from 'imā nukam...' and ending with 'ṛṣibhiradāt...' may be called the first version.

The Aruṇopaniṣat which includes another set of mantras starting from 'bhadram karṇebhiḥ...' and ending with 'tapasvī puṇyo bhavati' may be called the second version.

This nomenclature 'smaller' version and 'bigger' version has been used by us only to have a better understanding of the problem. In fact none of the ancient scholars try to differentiate the Upaniṣat as 'smaller' or 'bigger'. They use the common term 'Aruṇopaniṣat' for indicating both the versions of the Upaniṣat.

For instance, Lakṣmīdhara while commenting on the Saundarya Laharī verses (e.g. verses 11, 32 and 40) uses the common term 'Aruṇopaniṣat' for both the versions of the Upaniṣad. Actually under verse 11, he quotes from the smaller version and under verse 32 and 40 he quotes from the bigger version. This proves that Lakṣmīdhara is not inclined to make any differentiation between the two versions.

Bhāskararāya too, while referring to the Aruṇopaniṣat in the midst of his commentary on Lalitā Sahasranāma, quotes from the smaller version and also from the bigger version of Aruṇopaniṣat under Lalitā Sahasranāma śloka 73 (sumeru śṛnga...). Under śloka 74 (mahāpadmāṭavī...) he quotes from the 'smaller' version.

Under śloka 91 (taḍillatā samarucih ..) he quotes from the smaller version. Again under śloka 95 (nirlepā nirmalā) he quotes from the smaller version.

Under šloka 134 (oḍyana pīṭha nilaya...) he quotes from the bigger version. Under šloka 139 (atmavidya...) he quotes from the bigger version.

Thus Bhaskararaya is seen quoting from both the versions under the common reference 'Aruṇopaniṣat'.

Ramananda while commenting on the mantras of the Tripuropaniṣat, quotes from the smaller version under the 5th mantra and quotes from the bigger version under the 9th mantra. He also does not differentiate between the two versions of the Aruṇopaniṣat.

The same is true with Kamesvara Sūrī, the author of Aruṇamodinī commentary on Saundarya Laharī.

Perhaps the ancient Śrīvidya tradition never wanted to differentiate between the two versions. But in a modern study, this differentiation is necessary to make the point clear in a better manner. At least for this purpose the Aruṇopaniṣat should be differentiated as 'smaller' and 'bigger' versions.

The author of the present book while he was planning the present study on Aruṇopaniṣat, had to engage himself in deep thinking for a long time to decide whether the present book should be on the bigger version of the Aruṇopaniṣat or it should be confined only to the smaller version.

In fact if the bigger version is studied, it will automatically include the smaller version, as the 27th Aunvaka is falling under the 32 Aunvakas of the T.A.

Still on repeated thinking it was finally decided to confine this study only to the smaller version. There

are several valid reasons for effecting this decision. A few of the most important reasons may be revealed here for the benefit of the readers.

(a) A compact and complete commentary is available for all the mantras of the smaller version of the Aruṇopaniṣat. From this we are able to discover the cogent and central ideas of this Upaniṣat.

(b) With regard to the mantras of the bigger version, we have already mentioned that the bigger version covers all the mantras of 32 Anuvākas. Of these 32 Anuvākas, some kind of interpretation or explanation is written either by Lakṣmīdhara or by Bhāskararāya is available only for a very few mantras of the bigger version.

(c) Even if we include for argument sake, the smaller version as forming part of the bigger version, apart from the mantras of the smaller version, commentary is available only for a few mantras of the bigger version as follows:

Under Saundarya Laharī śloka 32, Lakṣmīdhara starts quoting from the bigger version. Here he quotes only ten mantras of the eleventh Anuvāka. He also writes a few lines by way of explanation on these above mentioned mantras.

Again under śloka 40, Lakṣmīdhara quotes four mantras from the 5th Anuvāka, two mantras from the 22nd Anuvāka and refers to a few other mantras of the 22nd Anuvāka. He also briefly explains them.

Similarly, as mentioned before, Bhāskarāya quotes from the bigger version a very few mantras and explains them very briefly.

In almost all the Śrīvidya texts only the above quoted mantras of the bigger version are again and again quoted. No Śrīvidya text seems to quote other mantras of the bigger version and comment on them.

Thus with regard to the bigger version the very pertinent question arises as to why only a very few mantras alone are quoted and annotated while there are plenty of mantras available in all the 32 Anuvakas put together.

At the same time, from the statement of Lakṣmī-dhara, we clearly understand that the Aruṇopaniṣat (i.e. the bigger version in our terminology) contains hundreds of mantras from 'bhadram karṇebhiḥ' to 'tapasvī puṇyo bhavati.'

Under the circumstances, if the bigger version of the Aruṇopaniṣat is to be studied, it is necessary that there should be a good commentary on it. Lakṣmīdhara or Bhaskara could have easily given us an excellent commentary on the bigger version. Instead, they have chosen to give us only a very few mantras with a commentary. Even these few mantras are random selections from the bigger version.

For all these, and for other reasons, we have decided to include in this book only the smaller version of the Aruṇopaniṣat.

It is not known for certain, why, of all the Prapaṭhakas of the T.A., only the first Prapaṭhaka was considered by the Śrīvidya tradition to be called 'Aruṇo paniṣat'. Even here, only the 27th Anuvaka has the honour of existing with a commentary by the Śrīvidya scholar.

In this connection it may be mentioned that a speciality is attached to the First Prapaṭhaka in the general Vedic tradition. This First Prapaṭhaka, which is also known as First Amśa, is traditionally made use of

to worship the Sun god and so this First Amśa is also called Śūrya namaskara text.

Although all the Vedic mantras are sacred, some mantras of some of the Vidic texts somehow have come to be attached with some special honour.

While in the general Vedic tradition the First Prapaṭhaka of T. A. is more attached to the worship of the Sun, the Śrīvidya tradition has chosen the same First Prapaṭhaka for the worship of the Goddess.

While the bigger version has been generally mentioned as Aruṇopaniṣat, only a few mantras of it have become more popular as Anunopanisat. And therefore practically, the 27 th Anuvaka and a few mantras of the bigger version alone are cited as Aruṇopaniṣat in many Śrīvidya texts.

The author of the present book may include some more of the well-known mantras of the bigger version in the second edition of this book along with the smaller version of this Upaniṣat, if permitted by his teacher to do so.

Before concluding this topic, it is necessary to point out an important fact. In his commentary on Saundarya Laharī (Verse 40) Lakṣmīdhara says that a major portion of the (bigger version of) Aruṇopaniṣat has been explained by him in his Subhagodaya commentary.

Lakṣmīdhara also gives a small summary of a portion of the 22nd Anuvāka. In this, he explains some of the mantras of the 22nd Anuvāka from the Śrīvidyā point of view.

It is really a great loss to the present-day Śrividyā world that the Subhagodaya commentary of Lakṣmīdhara has been lost. This Subhagodaya commentary seems to

contain many precious materials for a Śrīvidyā student. Frequent quotations from this prove that Subhagodaya commentary must be a wonderful work.

Let us at least pray to the Goddess that the Saundarya Laharī commentary by Lakṣmīdhara has been preserved for us by her supreme mercy.

The Date of Aruṇopaniṣat

We shall now discuss about the date of Aruṇopaniṣat. It has already been indicated that what is called in Śrīvidyā tradition 'Aruṇopaniṣat' is nothing but the mantras of the First Prapāṭhaka of T.A. Therefore it may be argued that there is no need to discuss separately about the date of Aruṇopaniṣat as it would coincide with the date of T.A.

In this connention it is necessary to point out that the first six mantras of the Aruṇopaniṣat (starting from 'imā nukam' to 'avitā tanūnām') are found in the Ṛgveda, 10.157.1-3. These six Aruṇopaniṣat mantras are repeated in the Sāmaveda also (Uttarārcika, 7.4.). All this shows that even long before the time of T. A. some of the Aruṇopaniṣat mantras must have remained discovered by some sages of the Ṛgveda,

From one point of view this argument is a valid one. But our problem in this study is not to discuss either the date of the Ṛgveda or that of T A.

Our immediate problem is to find out from what time the present mantras of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka came to be known as Aruṇopaniṣat. Our readers should try to undertand the signif cance of this statement.

It is true that there are certain mantras which are found in certain texts like the Ṛgveda or T.A. These mantras no doubt are of the age of those texts in which they now find a place. But at what period these mantras were recognised with a particular name in a particular tradition is the question here.

We may explain the problem like this. Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara and Sāyaṇa who are assigned to the 14th or 15th century A.D. do not record anywhere in their commentaries that a portion of the mantras of the T.A is called by a special name 'Aruṇopaniṣat'. This shows that in the general Vedic tradition even as late as 14th or 15th century A.D. no recognition was accorded to the Aruṇopaniṣat. That is why both the Vedic interpreters never made any note of the Aruṇopaniṣat.

While we fail to notice in the general Vedic tradition about the existence of Aruṇopaniṣat as late as the 14th-15th centuries, we have evidence to the fact that certainly by about the 14th-15th centuries A.D. the Śrīvidyā tradition recognised Aruṇopaniṣat.

This fact is evidenced by the Saundarya Laharī commentary of Lakṣmīdhara whose date is assigned to the 14th-15th century A.D. This shows that Aruṇopaniṣat was recognised at least by about the 15th century in the Śrīvidyā tradition.

From the commentary of Lakṣmīdhara we learn that Lakṣmīdhara may not be the first person to recognise the Upaniṣadic status of a portion of the T.A. mantras. The way in which Lakṣmīdhara respects the Arnṇopaniṣat proves hat Aruṇopaniṣat must have been recognised as a great

Upaniṣat at least one or two centuries before the time of Lakṣmīdhara.

Therefore it is now our duty to see whether any early Śrīvidya texts like Vamakeśvarī Tantra or any of its old commentaries make any reference to Aruṇopaniṣat.

Although the exact date of Vamakeśvarī Tantra may not be fixed beyond discussion, we may roughly place it in the 10th century A.D. Some of the old commentaries of the Vamakeśvarī Tantra which are now preserved for us may be dated from the 11th to 13th centuries A.D.

Unfortunately neither the Vamakeśvarī Tantra nor any of its old commentaries make any direct or indirect mention of Aruṇopaniṣat. The absence of evidence about the Aruṇopaniṣat in these early texts may not prove the non-existence of Aruṇopaniṣat in the 10-13 centuries. But the non-reference to Aruṇopaniṣat in these texts really embarrasses any follower of Śrīvidya tradition.

There is one encouraging fact in the Rudrayamala Tantra which is certainly a very ancient Śrīvidya Tantra. Rudrayamala Tantra may be assigned to the 8th or 9th centuries A.D. Unfortunately the original Rudrayamala is lost to us even though a Tantra by name Rudrayamalam (Uttara tantram) has been published in 1980 by Sampurnanand Sanskrit Visvavidyalaya in Varaṇasi. Lakṣmīdhara in order to introduce the Aruṇopaniṣat to us quotes six verses from Rudrayamala and these verses are given in Section 1 of this book.

These verses are not traceable in the printed text of Rudrayamala published from Varaṇasi. But till about the 19th century A.D. the original Rudrayamala was available. Now it is not to be found.

The Problem of Authorship of Aruṇopaniṣat Commentary

We will now turn our attention to consider the problem of authorship of the Aruṇopaniṣat commentary.

We have already mentioned that the Aruṇopaniṣat mantras together with a brief commentary is found in the midst of Lakṣmīdhara's commentary under the eleventh verse of Saundarya Laharī.

While commenting on the eleventh verse, Lakṣmīdhara suddenly introduces the (smaller version of) Aruṇopaniṣat with a commentary. As an introduction to the Aruṇopaniṣat commentary Lakṣmīdhara quotes a few verses from the Rudrayamala Tantra. After the Rudrayamala quotation Lakṣmīdhara begins to comment on the mantras of the Aruṇopaniṣat one by one.

As Lakṣmīdhara does not say that the entire commentary on Aruṇopaniṣat is a quotation from some other source, the scholars have assumed that Lakṣmīdhara must be the author of the Aruṇopaniṣat. So far, no modern scholar has entertained any doubt regarding the authorship of Aruṇopaniṣat commentary.

But a deep study of some other Śrīvidya texts induce us that there is some problem with regard to the authorship of the Aruṇopaniṣat commentary.

Ramananda a scholar of Śrīvidyā who lived in the 17th century has written a commentary on Tripuropaniṣat which is another important Upaniṣat of the Śrīvidya radition.

While commenting on the 5th mantra of Tripuropaniṣat, Ramananda suddenly quotes some passages on Aruṇpaniṣat as found in Lakṣmīdhara's Commentary under the eleventh verse of Saundarya Laharī. The quotation fully agrees with Lakṣmīdhara's passages.

If Ramananda has taken the entire passages from Lakṣmīdhara, then it is obligatory on the part of Ramananda to acknowledge the original author of the passages. But Ramananda has no word of acknowledgement.

What does this mean? Are we to blame Ramananda for plagiarism? Before we accuse Ramananda let us think whether there is any other explanation on this problem.

There is a possibility that Ramananda might have taken the entire passages on Aruṇopaniṣat from some other source. In this case Ramananda should have acknowledged the concerned person whoever he may be. Or, Ramananda should have explained that the author of Aruṇopaniṣat was an anonymous person.

In this case the accusation may be levelled even on Lakṣmīdhara. If Lakṣmīdhara had taken it from a known person or from an anonymous person he should have acknowledged it openly.

It is difficult to actually accuse either Ramananda or Lakṣmīdhara in the absence of any other valid evidence on this problem.

The problem of authorship is discussed here not on the solitary evidence of Ramananda.

Bhaskararaya, as we have already noticed, has made some references to Aruṇopaniṣat and its commentary in his

Lalitā Sahasranāma bhāṣya. Under the Sahasranāma verse 74 (mahāpadmāṭavī samṣthā......) Bhāskara says that 'a particular point has been made clear in the Aruṇopaniṣat commentary.' This is the only place where Bhāskara refers to the commentary on Arnṇopaniṣat. But Bhāskara does not mention the name of the author of the commentary. If he had mentioned the name of the author we would now be in a position to fix the authorship of the commentary.

Similarly, of all the other commentators of Saundarya Laharī, Kāmeśvara Sūrī is the only author to refer to Arnṇopaniṣat and its commentary. But Kāmeśvara too does not name the author of the Aruṇopasiṣat commentary.

Bhāskara, Rāmānanda and Kāmeśvara know Lakṣmīdhara as the commentator of Subhagodaya. In his Saharanāma commentary under verse 113 Bhāskara names the author of Subhagodaya commentary as 'Lalla' which is perhaps the family surname of Lakṣmīdhara.

Similarly Rāmananda too names (under mantra 4) the author of Subhagodaya commentary as 'Lolla Lakṣmīdhara'. 'Lalla' or 'Lolla' are the same words to denote the surname of Lakṣmīdhara.

The question is this: If Bhaskara and Ramananda could have openly accepted him to be the author of Aruṇopaniṣat commentary also. It is true that the non-availability of the plain acceptance of the name of Lakṣmīdhara as the Aruṇopaniṣat commentary either by Bhāskara or by Rāmānanda may not prove that Lakṣmīdhara is not the author of Aruṇopaniṣat commentary, but it will certainly let loose a strong doubt with regard to the authorship.

In this connection it is interesting to note some favourable points to accept Lakṣmīdhara's authorship of the Aruṇopaniṣat commentary.

In the Aruṇopaniṣat commentary, there are two sentences which are worth notcing in this connection. These two sentences are reproduced on p.5 of this book and also on p.15.

In English, the first sentence referred to above means: It will be explained later that the shining nature of the Sun, Moon and Agni is actually due to the grace of the rays born from the Goddess.

In English, the second sentence referred to above means : The nature of Sarṣṭi and others will be explained later on.

As promised in these two sentences quoted above Lakṣmīdhara explains in detail the first (above quoted) idea under Saundarya Laharī verse No. 14.

Similarly, Lakṣmīdhara explains in detail the second (above quoted) idea under Saundarya Laharī Verse No.99.

These two evidences prove that there is an integral connection between the Lakṣmīdhara's commentary on Aruṇopaniṣat and the commentary on the Saundarya Laharī verses.

At the same time when we look into the Ramananda's quotation on Aruṇopaniṣat and its commentary, we are a bit shocked to notice a very significant variation in these two sentences.

The first quotation (on p.5) says in Lakṣmīdhara अत्तरत्र वक्ष्यते which means 'it will be explained later'. This important proof which is found in Lakṣmīdhara has been changed in Ramananda as इत्युक्तम् (p.39 of Tripuropaniṣad commentary). This means 'it is said so'. This little

change shatters the evidence which is in favour of Lakṣmīdhara as the author of Aruṇopaniṣat commentary.

The second quotation (on p.15) says पुरस्तात् प्रपञ्चयते which means 'it will be explained later'. This has been changed in Ramananda (p.43) as अन्वेति. This means 'it fits in with...'. This change also goes against Lakṣmīdhara.

It is to be discussed here whether Lakṣmīdhara's version is original or Rāmānanda's. As pointed out in Lakṣmīdhara's text, the points are explained under some later Saundarya Laharī verses and therefore we formerly agreed that there is logical connection between the Aruṇopaniṣat commentary and the rest of the Saundarya Laharī Commentaries.

In the case of Ramananda's readings also ideally they fit in with the context of Tripura Upaniṣad.

According to the Aruṇopaniṣat commentary as found in Lakṣmīdhara, the Aruṇopaniṣat commentary seems to be an integral part of Saundarya Laharī commentary and this goes in favour of Lakṣmīdhara.

But aocording to the Aruṇopaniṣat commentary as found in Ramananda, the Aruṇopaniṣat commentary seems to be an independent commentary on Aruṇopaniṣat and it goes against Lakṣmīdhara.

Therefore the two sentences quoted above represent the deciding evidence to settle the whole issue on the authorship of Aruṇopaniṣat commentary.

Unfortunately we cannot pass any judgement over the two important sentences and we have to wait for some more convincing evidences.

At the same time it must be accepted that the general spirit and ideas expressed throughout Lakṣmīdhara's commentary on the Saundarya Laharī verses are in perfect

agreement with the spirit and ideas contained in the small commentary on Aruṇopaniṣat. This again proves that Lakṣmīdhara might be accepted as the common commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat and Saundarya Laharī verses.

It is certain that all the above mentioned points for or against Lakṣmīdhara's authorship of Aruṇopaniṣat commentary has not disproved any claim of Lakṣmīdhara over the authorship of Aruṇopaniṣat commentary, it has only raised some valid doubts about the authorship of Aruṇopaniṣat commentary.

As a careful student of modern research, it is therefore our duty to approach the problem in a cautious way. That is why throughout this book, Lakṣmīdhara's name has not been mentioned as the author of the Aruṇopaniṣat commentary. All through the pages of this book mention has been made as 'the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat' in order to remain cautious over this problem of authorship of Aruṇopaniṣat commentary.

Personally the present author of this book is inclined to accepting Lakṣmīdhara as the author of the Aruṇopaniṣat commentary. But due reservation has been excercised in this book to respect the valid doubts raised against Lakṣmīdhara.

If Bhāskara, instead of saying 'अरुणोपनिषद् भाष्ये... स्पष्टीकृतम्' (P.40) had said 'अरुणोपनिषद् भाष्ये लल्लेन स्पष्टीकृतम्', at least on this strong evidence the commentary on Aruṇopaniṣat may be assigned to Lakṣmīdhara without waiting for other evidences.

Unfortunately no Śrīvidyā scholar has so far been helpful to us to assign the authorship of Aruṇopaniṣad commentary to Lakṣmīdhara. It is hoped that our learned readers would understand the embarrassment of the present

author of this book in not naming Lakṣmīdhara as the commentator in an explicit way.

The Past and Present Editions of Aruṇoponiṣat and the Salient Features of Aruṇopaniṣat

In the past, whenever Saundarya Laharī was printed separately with Lakṣmīdhara's commentary or along with the other commentaries, the Aruṇopaniṣat, together with its commentary which forms part of Lakṣmīdhara's commentary, has also been printed.

Only very rarely Aruṇopaniṣat with its commentary has been printed separately. In this commentary the edition of Aruṇopaniṣat by Arthur Avalon, as part of Tantrik Texts may by mentioned The edition was published in 1922. It contains the mantras of the Aruṇopaniṣat together with the commentary.

The next separate edition of Aruṇopaniṣat with its commentary appears to be the book which is presented before the readers now.

So far no attempt seems to have been made either to translate the Upaniṣat or the commentary. This book is the first attempt to translate it and my first ever translation comes in English for the benefit of a larger number of readers.

Another important feature of this edition is that it contains an elaborate exposition in Part 3 of this present edition.

Those who compare this edition with other editions of Aruṇopaniṣat, would immediately find the difference.

The first part of the book gives the Sanskrit text in an altogether new arrangement. The text and commen-

tary are printed differently in a new manner with a view to help even an ordinary student of Sanskrit to understand the text without any big problem. Enough punctuation marks have been used to facilitate a better understanding of the meaning and the hidden sense of the sentences. This arrangement has been resorted to help those who would like to enjoy the Sanskrit text and the commentary even if they possess a basic knowledge of Sanskrit.

All readers of the book are strongly recommended to come forward to taste the sweetness of the text in its original form. A repeated reading of the Sanskrit texual portion will give the readers a deep feeling of satisfaction.

The Sanskrit text is divid d into 28 Sections. Each Section contains a complete idea by itself even though it maintains a close relationship with the previous and the later Sections.

It may be noted in each edition of the Aruṇopaniṣat that there is no uniformity with regard to the grouping of the mantras of the Upaniṣat. Mostly it is the editor's convenience and pleasnre that decides the grouping. If we look into the Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara's edition of Aruṇopaniṣat and compare it with that of Sāyaṇa, we may see a lot of difference in the grouping of the mantras. This shows that even in the Vedic tradition there was no uniformity in respect of the grouping of the mantras.

In order to decide whether a particular mantra is to be treated as one independent mantra or more than one mantra, there seems to be no logical basis.

Sometimes the Śrīvidyā commentator gives us a clue whether he considers a particular mantra to be one or two. For example, in Section 6, there is a mantra printed

as one mantra but the commentator remarks that they are two mantras.

If we compare the Aruṇopaniṣad edition included in Saundarya Laharī commentary and the Aruṇopaniṣad edition included in the Tripuropaniṣad commentary we may find a lot of difference.

For example, in the Saundarya Laharī edition the mantras are separated (as given in Section 9 and 10). But the Tripuropaniṣad text treats them as one mantra. This proves that even in the Śrīvidya tradition there is no uniformity. All these differences need not be taken seriously. It mostly depends upon the attitude of a particular commentator or editor.

With the result we are not able to fix the actual total number of the mantras of the smaller version of the Aruṇopaniṣat. In this book the division of various Sections is not based on the mantras of the Upaniṣat. It is based mostly on the unitary idea contained in a particular context.

We shall now come to deal with the Part 2.

The Part 2 follows the same Sectional arrangement as that of Part 1. As mentioned before, this is the first ever translation of the mantras and the commentary divided into some convenient Sections.

In this Part 2, we are more interested in giving a literal translation of the Sanskrit text. In order to make the literal meaning more clear, some words in brackets are used. These bracketed words would help the readers to get a clearer meaning of the Sanskrit passages.

Originally it was thought of using throughout the part 2, only the transliterated forms of Sanskrit in Roman letters. But due to certain practical difficulties the Devanāgarī letters had to be used for representing the textual words throughout Part 2.

Although English is closer to Sanskrit as a language, at times it is difficult to give a literal English translation without making it a clumsy sentence. In such rare cases there may be some free translation of the Sanskrit passages. In some cases in order to avoid a difficult complex sentence simple constructions have been adopted even though the original has a different sentence pattern peculiar to Sanskrit.

Attempt has been made to identify all the important textual passages with exact reference to their original texts. But it is needless to point out that Sanskrit language and literature is like a very vast ocean and it is never possible for anybody to have a good knowledge of all the ideas which the great commentators of the past had. The commentators of the past are really and admirably best, wonderful and deep and it is very difficult to keep track of them.

The commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat normally expects his readers to have a thorough knowledge of all the Śastras. For example the commentator, assuming a good knowledge of Sanskrit Grammar in his readers, makes a casual remark 'praptakale lot' (P.3)

Unless the reader happens to be a very good scholar of Sanskrit Grammar in the traditional Indian way, the significance of the Grammatical remark made by the commentator cannot be understood fully.

Sometimes the commentator quotes a Vartika of Katyayana. For example on P.17 of this book the Vartika 'sāmānye napumsakam' is quoted. Unless the reader is very familiar with the Vārtikas on Pāṇīnian Sūtras, it is difficult to understand the statement of the commentator.

On P.17, Bhaskararaya says 'the substitution of 'Dha' for 'Ha' has taken place here. Unless the reader is very familiar with the Vedic grammar, the meaning of the remark

of Bhaskara can never be understood. In order to understand the statement of Bhāskararāya the reader should first understand that the original Vedic word for 'Sudhitan' was 'Suhitān'. In the Vedic language the original letter 'hi' found in the word 'Suhitan' is substituted by the letter 'dhi' and so the word becomes 'Sudhitān'. In this way a deep knowledge of 'Sanskrit grammar as well as Vedic grammar becomes necessary for understanding some of the statements of the commentators.

Sometimes the commentator tries to help the readers to identify a particular Paṇinian Sūtra by quoting the first part of the Sūtra so that from the index, the Sūtra can be located easily. For example on P.9, the commentator quotes the first part of the Sūtra 'ājjase...'

Sometimes, as in the case of 'Praptakale lot', if the second or third word of the Sūtra is quoted, then it is very difficult to locate the actual Sūtra.

In some cases the commentator tries to give a good clue to locate a Sūtra. For example, on p.11 the commentator gives a useful clue:- 'at the end of the Sūtra Bhaṣya'. Even though this is not an exact reference to the Brahma Sūtra, the clue is useful to minimise the hardship of the reader to search for the actual reference in a limited place i.e. towards the end of Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya.

We shall now present before the readers some other points.

It will be noticed by the readers that in this book, apart from the commentary which is traditionally assigned to Lakṣmīdhara, some extracts from the Bhāskara's commentary also are added mainly to draw the attention of our readers towards the fact that Bhāskararaya also has written some explanations on some mantras of Aruṇopaniṣat.

While the Lakṣmīdhara's commentary is numbered serially from one to twenty-eight Sections, Bhaskararaya's

commentary on the fragmentary portions of Aruṇopaniṣat is numbered followed by a sub-division 'A'. Thus there are three Sections representing Bhaskararaya's commentary: They are 16(A), 20(A) and 25(A).

The Section 16(A) has been taken from the Lalita Sahasranama commentary (under śloka 91). The Section 20(A) is taken from Bhaskararaya's commentary on Yoginī Hṛdaya (under śloka 11). The Section 25(A) is again taken from the Lalita Sahasranama commentary (under śloka 91).

It is hoped that the readers would enjoy the statements of the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat which are placed side by side with the commentary of Bhaskararaya.

Usually Bhaskararaya's statements are very difficult to understand. He is such a great scholar and he expects the readers to follow him closely. A new and appreciable feature of this edition is that the reader is given an opportunity to read in one place, matters which are found scattered in many Śrīvidya texts.

While writing the book the present author was often tempted to draw parallels from the general Vedic commentators like Bhaṭṭa Bhaskara and Sayaṇa who commented on the whole of the T.A. (including the portion on Aruṇopaniṣat).

But it was not done so, for the main reason that Bhaṭṭa Bhaskara and Sayaṇa follow only the general Vedic tradition and therefore it may not be interesting in a book like this which focuses its attention mainly on Śrīvidya point of view.

Before concluding this introduction it is necessary to say that even though Aruṇopaniṣat is generally spiritual in nature, its interest on national and social problems are very inspiring especially in Sections 16, 16A and 26 of this book.

In short, Aruṇopaniṣat deserves to be ranked with the principal Upaniṣats of the Vedic tradition.

We invite cordially every - one of the spiritually oriented aspirants to come forward to taste the ambrosial Aruṇopaniṣat.

PART 1

अरुणोपनिषत्

(सव्याख्या)

अरुणोपनिषत् ।

(सव्याख्या)

1

अत्र रुद्रयामळे विशेष उक्तः—

पृश्नयो नाम मुनयः सर्वे चक्रसमाश्रयाः ।
सेवमानाश्चक्रविद्यां देवगन्धर्वपूजिताम् ।।

अग्नीषोमात्मकं चक्रमग्नीषोममयं जगत् ।
अग्नावन्तर्बभौ भानुः अग्नीषोममयं स्मृतम् ।।

त्रिखण्डं मातृकाचक्रं सोमसूर्यानलात्मकम् ।
त्रिकोणं बैन्दवं सौम्यमष्टकोणं च मिश्रकम् ।।

चक्रं चन्द्रमयं चैव दशारद्वितयं तथा ।
चतुर्दशारं वह्नेस्तु चतुश्चक्रं च भानुमत् ।।

एतत्प्रसादादिन्द्राद्या वसवोऽष्टौ मरुद्गणाः ।
ये ये समृद्धा लोकेऽस्मिन् त्रिपुराचक्रसेवकाः ।।

पुरत्रयं च चक्रस्य सोमसूर्यानलात्मकम् ।
महालक्ष्म्याः पुरं चक्रं तत्रैवास्ते सदाशिवः ।। इति ।।

2

इममेवार्थं श्रुतिरप्याह तैत्तिरीयके अरुणोपनिषत् 'इमा नुकं भुवना सीषधेम' इत्यारभ्य 'ऋषिभिरदात् पृश्निभिः' इत्यन्ता ।

अरुणोपनिषन्नाम—अरुणायाः भगवत्याः प्रतिपादिका उपनिषत् ।

'भद्रं कर्णेभिः' इत्यारभ्य 'तपस्वी पुण्यो भवति' इत्यन्ता अरुणोपनिषत् अरुणामेव प्रतिपादयति ।

इममर्थं दृष्टवान् अरुणकेतुः ऋषिः ।

3

श्रुत्यर्थस्तावत्—

इमा नुकं भुवना सीषधेम ॥

अस्यार्थः—
पृश्नयो नाम मुनयः परस्परं सङ्गिरन्ते ।
इमां = चक्रविद्याम् ।
नुकं = वितर्के ।
भुवना = भुवनानि ।
सीषधेम = अवगच्छाम ।

चक्रविद्यामुपाश्रित्यैव भुवनान्यवतिष्ठन्त इति वितर्कयाम इत्यर्थः ।

यद्वा—
इमां = चक्रविद्यां
भुवना = भुवनात्मतया
सीषधेम नुकं, नु = पृच्छायाम् ।
'नु पृच्छायां वितर्के च' इत्यमरः ॥

4

इन्द्रश्च विश्वे च देवाः ॥

अस्य वाक्यस्यार्थः स्पष्ट एव ।

चक्रविद्यामुपाश्रित्यैव आसत इति शेषः ॥

5

यज्ञं च नस्तन्वं च प्रजां च ।
आदित्यैरिन्द्रः सह सीषधातु ॥

अस्यार्थः—

यज्ञं = आग्निष्टोमादिकम् ।

नः = अस्माकं ।

तन्वं = तनूं ।

शरीरार्धं पत्नीमिति यावत् ।

प्रजां = सन्तानम् ।

चकारात्सर्वास्सम्पदः ।

आदित्यैः = मरुद्गणैः सह इन्द्रः चक्रविद्योपासनात् प्राप्तपरमैश्वर्यः । इन्द्रश्चक्रविद्यामस्माकं उपदिश्य सीषधातु सम्पा (दयतु) ब्तवान् । प्राप्तकाले लोट् ॥

6

आदित्यैरिन्द्रः सगणो मरुद्भिः ।
अस्माकं भूत्ववितो तनूनाम् ॥

मन्त्रद्वयस्यार्थः—

तनूनां = पुत्रमित्रकलत्रादीनां ।

अविता = रक्षकः ।

भूतु = भवतीत्यर्थः ।

इन्द्र एवास्माकं योगक्षेमसम्पादक इति भावः ।।

7

आप्लवस्व प्रप्लवस्व ।।

पृश्नयश्चक्रविद्यां प्रस्तुवन्ति ।

आपादमस्तकं प्लवनं अमृतनिष्यन्दसेचनं कुरु ।

प्रकर्षेण प्लवनं द्विसप्ततिसहस्रनाडीमार्गेषु आसेचनं कुरु ।।

8

आण्डीभव ज मा मुहुः ।।

आण्डी = पिण्डाण्डं ब्रह्माण्डं च, च्विप्रत्ययान्तः ।

भव = पिण्डाण्डरूपेणास्मदीयेन ब्रह्माण्डरूपेण बाह्येन भवदीयेन प्राप्नुहि ।

भवत्सायुज्यं देहीत्यर्थः ।

ज = अवगच्छ ।

मुहुर्मामवगच्छ, अनुगृहाणेत्यर्थः ।

'अज गतौ' इति धातोः अकारलोपश्छान्दसः ।।

9

सुखादींदुःखनिधनाम् ।।

अस्यार्थः–

सुखमत्ति = आदयतीति = सुखादि = सुखसम्पादकः ।

इन्दुः = चन्द्रः, बैन्दवस्थानगतः ।

खनिधनां = खं बैन्दवस्थानमेव नितरां धनं यस्यास्सा ताम् ।

यद्वा–

सुखादीं = सुखप्रथमां, सुखात्मिकाम् ।

दुःखस्य निधनं नाशो तत्रेति दुःखनिधनां, अविज्ञातदुःखगन्धामित्यर्थः ।

यद्वा-

सुखादीं = शोभनेन खेन = इन्द्रियेण, मनसा ।

आदीं = आद्यां, मनोवेद्यामित्यर्थः ।

दुःखनिधनां दुःखानां दुष्टेन्द्रियाणां चक्षुरादीनां अगोचरामिति ।।

10

प्रतिमुञ्चस्व स्वां पुरम् ।।

स्वां = भगवतीं ।

पुरं = देहं ।

प्रतिमुञ्चस्व = अधितिष्ठ ।।

11

मरीचयः स्वायंभुवाः ।।

अस्यार्थः-

स्वयं = भगवत्याः सकाशात् ।

भवा = उत्पन्नाः ।

मरीचयो = मयूखाः ।

सर्वाणि भुवनानि आवृत्य वर्तन्त इति वाक्यशेषः ।

सूर्यचन्द्राग्नीनां प्रकाशकत्वं स्वायंभुवमरीचिप्रसादादेवेति उत्तरत्र वक्ष्यते ।।

12

ये शरीराण्यकल्पयन् ॥

अस्यार्थः-

ये = मयूखाः । षष्ट्युत्तरत्रिशतसङ्ख्याकाः शरीराणि कालात्मकानि षष्ट्युत्तरत्रिशतसङ्ख्याकानि दिनानि, तान्येव संवत्सरः । 'संवत्सरो वै प्रजापतिः' इति श्रुतेः ॥

13

ते ते देहं कल्पयन्तु ॥

ते = मरीचयः ।

ते = तव, भगवत्याः ।

देहं कल्पयन्तु = देहमाश्रयन्तु ।

देहशब्देन देहावयवश्चरणमुच्यते । भवच्चरणोत्पन्ना इत्यर्थः ॥

14

मा च ते ख्या स्म तीरिषत् ॥

ते = तव ।

ख्या = ख्यातिः = ज्ञानं ।

मा च तीरिषत् = अस्मान् न जहातु ।

भवद्विषयज्ञानं अस्माकं सदा सिद्ध्यत्वित्यर्थः ॥

15

इतःपरं पृश्नयश्चक्रविद्यानुष्ठाने त्वरमाणाः परस्परं सङ्गिरन्ते ।

16

उत्तिष्ठत मा स्वप्त । अग्निमिच्छध्वं भारताः ॥
राज्ञः सोमस्य तृप्तासः । सूर्येण सयुजोषसः ॥

ऋचोऽयमर्थः–

हे भारताः = भायां भारूपायां ज्योतीरूपायां चक्रविद्यायामिति यावत् ।

रताः = उपासनारताः ।

यद्वा-

भारत्याः = सरस्वत्याः = श्रीविद्यायाः उपासकाः ।

सामान्यविहितप्रत्ययस्य विशेषवाचित्वात् 'भारता' इति ।

उत्तिष्ठत = उपासनोपक्रमं कुरुत ।

मा स्वप्त = अप्रमत्ता भवत ।

अग्निमिच्छध्वं = स्वाधिष्ठानगताग्निं प्रज्वलयत ।

राज्ञः = चन्द्रस्य ।

उमया सहितः = सोमः ।

चन्द्रमण्डलान्तर्गतबैन्दवस्थानगतत्वात् देव्याः, चन्द्रस्य सोमशब्दवाच्यत्वसिद्धिः ।

तस्य चन्द्रस्य निष्यन्दैः तृप्तासः = तृप्ताः ।

सूर्येण = अनाहतचक्रविशुद्धिचक्रयोर्मध्ये स्थितेन सूर्येण ।

सयुजा = अग्निचन्द्रयोर्मध्यवर्तिना इत्यर्थः ।

यद्वा–

सूर्येण सयुजा राज्ञा तृप्तास इत्यन्वयः ।

कीदृशाः ?–

उषसः = प्लुष्टमायामयक्लेशाः ।

यद्वा-

उषसः = उषःकाले ध्यानरताः ।

तस्मिन् काल एव भगवतीनिदिध्यासनादेर्विहतत्वात् ॥

16 (A)

अस्य मन्त्रस्य भास्कररायकृत भाष्यम् ।

इयं चोपनिषत्सर्वापि भगवतीपरैव ।

उपबृंहणदर्शनात् । 'अरुणोपनिषद्गीते'ति श्यामलासहस्रनामसु पाठाच्च ।

पृश्निनामकानामुपासकानां परस्परमुक्तिरियं भारतीसरस्वतीविद्येति यावत् ।

तत्संबन्धिनो = भारताः ।

हे श्रीविद्योपासकाः, उत्तिष्ठत उपास्तिक्रमे प्रवर्तध्वम् ।

मा स्वप्त = प्रमत्ता मा भूत ।

अन्तर्भावितण्यर्थे वा कुण्डलिनीकर्मकाविमौ धातू योजनीयौ ।

अग्निं स्वाधिष्ठानगताग्नितेजोमयीं = कुण्डलिनीमिच्छध्वं ।

इच्छादण्डेनाहत्योत्थापयध्वम् ।

सूर्येण सयुजा = विशुध्यनाहतचक्रयोर्मध्यवर्तिसूर्यसहितेनतेनाग्निना ।

उषसो दग्धस्य = द्रुतस्येतियावत् ।

सोमस्य = उमया राजराजेश्वर्या सहितस्य, राज्ञो = राजराजेश्वरस्य सहस्रारीयचन्द्रमण्डलान्तर्गतस्य वा ।

अर्थादमृतेन तृप्तासो भवत = तृप्यत ।

अग्निकुण्डलिनीमुत्थाप्य सूर्यकुण्डलिन्या संयोज्य ताभ्यां चन्द्रमण्डल-शिवशक्तिसामरस्येन द्रावयित्वा तदुत्थामृतधाराभिर्द्विसप्ततिसहस्रनाडीमार्गानापूर्य तृप्ता भवतेत्यर्थः ।

तृप्तास इत्यत्र 'आज्जसे' रित्यसुगागमः ।

17

इतःपरं पूजासामग्रीमुपदिशन्ति पृश्नयः-

युवा सुवासा ।

युवा = दृढाङ्गः स्वस्थः ।

सुवासाः = शुभ्रवस्त्रः ।

इदं शुभ्राभरणशुभ्रमाल्यादीनामुपलक्षकम् ।

एवंविधः सन् पूजयेदिति शेषः ॥

18

श्रीचक्रस्य स्वरूपं तावदाहुः-

अष्टाचक्रा नवद्वारा ॥

अष्टकोण – दशकोणद्वितय – चतुर्दशकोण - अष्टपत्र-षोडशपत्र-त्रिवलय-त्रिरेखात्मकानि अष्टौ चक्राणि यस्याः सा अष्टाचक्रा ।

अत एव नवद्वारा नवसङ्ख्याकानि द्वाराणि यस्याः सा नवद्वारा ॥

19

देवानां पूरयोध्या ॥

देवानामिन्द्रादीनां पूज्यत्वेन सम्बन्धिनी पूः = श्रीविद्यानगरम् ।

यद्वा-

दीव्यन्तीति देवाः, पञ्चविंशतितत्त्वानि तेषां पूरधिष्ठानम् ।

यद्वा-

सूर्यचन्द्राग्नीनां पूः, सोमसूर्यानलात्मकत्वात् श्रीचक्रस्य ।

तस्य पुरत्रयसमष्टिरूपत्वात् पूरित्येकवचनसिद्धिरिति ध्येयम् ।

अयोध्या = असाध्या, मन्दभाग्यानामिति शेषः ।।

20

तस्याँ हिरण्मयः कोशः ।
स्वर्गो लोको ज्योतिषावृतः ।।

अस्यार्थः-

तस्यां पुरि = श्रीचक्रमध्ये ।

हिरण्मयः कोशः = सहस्रदलकमलकोश इत्यर्थः ।

बैन्दवस्थाने सहस्रदलकमलकोशस्य विद्यमानत्वात् ।

तस्य कोशस्य ज्योतिषा स्वर्गो लोकः आवृतः ।

ज्योतिर्लोकः = स्वर्गलोक इत्यर्थः ।।

20 (A)

तथा चाथर्वणाः शौनकशाखीया आमनन्ति-

अष्टाचक्रा नवद्वारा देवानां पूरयोध्या ।
तस्यां हिरण्मयः कोशः स्वर्गो लोको ज्योतिषावृतः ।।
तस्मिन् हिरण्मये कोशे त्र्यरे त्रिप्रतिष्ठिते ।
तस्मिन् यद्यक्षमात्मन्यत्तद्वै ब्रह्म ।।

अस्य मन्त्रस्य भास्कररायकृतभाष्यम् ।

तैत्तिरीयशाखायां तु प्रथमान्तमिति विशेषः ।

त्रैलोक्यमोहनादिसर्वसिद्धिप्रदान्तचक्राष्टकयुक्तं नवयोनिघटितमन्येषामसाध्यं देवतावासभूतं श्रीचक्रनगरं यत्तत्राप्युत्तमः कोशो ज्योतिर्मयः स्वर्गतुल्यस्त्रिकोणनामकोऽस्ति, तस्मिन् कोणे त्रिधा प्रतिष्ठितं त्रिसमष्टिस्वरूपं बिन्दुरस्ति ।

तस्मिन् बिन्दुचक्रे स्वात्मनीव यद्यक्षं महाभूतं पूजनीयं तद् ब्रह्मैवेति वासनामज्ञा जानन्ति ।

भ्राजनादिविशेषणविशिष्टामपराजिताख्यां नगरीं प्रति ब्रह्मैव यस्मादाविवेशेति समुदायार्थः ।

ब्रह्मोपासकानां गन्तव्या पुनरावृत्तिवर्जिताऽपराजिताख्या नगरी काचिदस्ति ।

यस्यामरनामको ण्यनामकश्चेति द्वौ हृदौ सुधामयौ वर्तेते इत्यादिकं तु श्रीशङ्करभगवत्पादैः सूत्रभाष्यान्ते वर्णितम् ।

तन्नगराभिन्नमिदं श्रीचक्रम् ।

अत्र त्रिप्रतिष्ठित इति शब्दो न त्रयरस्य विशेषणम्, तथात्वे तस्मिन्निति पदद्वयस्य वैयर्थ्यापत्तेः, अतो बिन्दुपर एव ।

तेन बिन्दुचक्रस्य ध्यात्मकत्ववासना सिद्धाभवतीति द्रष्टव्यम् ॥

21

अथ पृश्नयः चक्रविद्योपासनायाः फलमाहुः–

यो वै तां ब्रह्मणो वेद । अमृतेनावृतां पुरीम् ।
तस्मै ब्रह्म च ब्रह्मा च । आयुः कीर्तिं प्रजां ददुः ॥

अयमर्थः—

ब्रह्मणः = ब्रह्मस्वरूपायाः भगवत्याः ।

तां = पूर्वोक्तां अमृतेन आवृतां चन्द्रमण्डलगलत्पीयूषधारावृतां ।

पुरीं = श्रीचक्ररूपां ।

त्रिपुरायाः पुरं यो वेद = ज्ञानपूर्वकमर्चनं करोति ।

तस्मै विदुषे = अर्चकाय ।

ब्रह्म च = ब्रह्मस्वरूपा भगवती ।

ब्रह्मा च = ब्रह्मरूपो भगवान् ।

चकारद्वयं उभयोर्मेलनं समुच्चिनोति ।

मिलितयोरेव वैन्दवस्थाने सहस्रारे सुधासिन्धुमध्ये मणिद्वीपे चिन्तामणिगृहे निवासात् ।

एतौ उभौ, आयुः = जीवितं ।

कीर्तिं = यशः ।

प्रजां = सन्तानं ।

ददुः = दद्यातां इत्यर्थः ।

'व्यत्ययो बहुलम्' इति वचनव्यत्ययः ॥

22

शिवशक्त्योः तत्रैव निवासमाहुः–

विभ्राजमानाँ हरिणीम् । यशसा संपरीवृताम् ।
पुरँ हिरण्मयीं ब्रह्मा । विवेशापराजिता ॥

ऋचोऽयमर्थः–

विभ्राजमानां =प्रकाशमानाम्, अनन्तकोटिसंख्याककिरणैरिति शेषः ।

हरिणीं = हिरण्यवर्णा ।

'हिरण्यवर्णां हरिणीं' इति श्रुतेः ।

यशसा = कीर्त्या सम्यक्परिवृताम् ।

ये ये लोके कीर्तिमन्तस्ते सर्वे भगवतीप्रसादसमासादितकीर्तिमन्त इत्यर्थः ।

तां बैन्दवीं पुरं = चिन्तामणिगृहं ।

ब्रह्मा = सदाशिवः ।

'ब्रह्मा शिवो मे अस्तु सदाशिवोम्' इति श्रुतेः ।

पुल्लिङ्गब्रह्मशब्दसदाशिवशब्दयोः एक एवार्थः प्रतीतः ।

विवेश = अपराजिता सादाख्या चन्द्रकला विवेश ।

वाक्यद्वयेन उभयोः प्रवेशभेदप्रतिपादनं –

"बैन्दवे चिन्तामणिगृहे सदाशिवः सर्वदा सन्निहितः ।

अपराजिता कुण्डलिनीशक्तिः षट्चक्राणिभित्वा भूयो भूयः प्रविशति" ॥

–इतीममर्थं ज्ञापयितुम् ॥

23

शिवशक्त्योः तस्मिन् चक्रे अवस्थितिप्रकारमाहुः–

पराङेत्यज्यामयी । परङेत्यनाशकी ॥

अस्यार्थः–

पराङ् = अधोमुखी चक्ररूपिणी शिवशक्त्योर्मध्ये, शक्तिः ।

अज्यामयी = ज्यानिरहिता = नाशरहिता, नित्या, दुःखरहिता, आनन्दमयी इत्यर्थः ।

एति = वर्तते ।

यद्वा–

अज्यामयी, ज्या = भूमिः, तेन पञ्चभूतानि लक्ष्यन्ते, तन्मयी ।

तन्मयी न भवतीत्यज्यामयी ।

मनस्तत्वादिमयी ।

शिवचक्रात्मकचतुर्योन्यात्मिकेति यावत्, शिवयोनीनां बैन्दवस्थानादधः अवाङ्मुखतया अवस्थानात् ।

अनाशकी = नाशरहिता = शक्तिचक्रात्मकपञ्चयोन्यात्मिका ।

पराङ् = अधोमुखी एति, शक्तियोनीनामपि शिवयोन्यपेक्षया अवाङ्मुखत्वात् ।

एवं शिवयोनिशक्तियोन्योः परस्परमवाङ्मुखत्वं चक्रलेखनक्रमादवगम्यते ॥

24

विदुषः फलमाहुः–

> इह चामुत्र चान्वेति ।
> विद्वान् देवासुरानुभयान् ॥

दीव्यन्तीति देवाः = एकादशेन्द्रियाणि ।

असुराः, असवः = प्राणाः प्राणादिपञ्चवायवः तान् रान्ति = आददत इति पञ्च तन्मात्रा उच्यन्ते ।

उभयान् = उभयत्र देवासुरेषु अन्वितान्, मायाशुद्धविद्यामहेश्वरसदाशिवान् ।

यो विद्वान् पञ्चविंशतितत्त्वजातं विदित्वा शिवशक्तिसम्पुटात्मकं पञ्चविंशतितत्वविलक्षणं षड्विंशतत्वं यस्तु वेत्ति स विद्वान् ।

इह च = इह लोके ।

पूजातारतम्यवशात् ।

अमुत्र च = परलोके ।

सार्ष्टिसालोक्यसामीप्यसारूप्यसायुज्यात्मिकया पञ्चविधया मुक्त्या
अन्वेति = युज्यते ।
सार्ष्ट्यादिस्वरूपं सप्रपञ्चं पुरस्तात् प्रपञ्चयते ।।

25

अथ देवासुरोभयज्ञानोपायमाहुः—

यत्कुमारी मन्द्रयते । यद्योषिद्यत्पतिव्रता ।
अरिष्टं यत्किंच क्रियते । अग्निस्तदनुवेधति ।।

अस्यार्थः—

कुण्डलिनीशक्तेरवस्थात्रयं विद्यते ।
यस्मिन् चक्रे कुमारी = कौमारावस्थामापन्ना प्रथमं सुप्तोत्थिता
मन्द्रयते = मन्द्रस्वरं करोति, कुण्डलिन्याः सर्पात्मकत्वात् ।
सर्पो हि सुप्तोत्थाने मन्द्रस्वरं करोति, तद्वदित्यर्थः ।
यद्योषित् यस्मिन् चक्रे कुलयोषित् विष्णुग्रन्थिपर्यन्तं गत्वा, रातीति
शेषः ।
'कुलयोषित् कुलं त्यक्त्वा राति विष्णोः प्रभेदने' ।
—इति सनत्कुमारवचनात् ।
यत् = यस्मिन् चक्रे ।
पतिव्रता = पत्या सदाशिवेन सार्धं सहस्रदलकमले विहरमाणा ।
रिष्टं = शुभाभावं ।
'रिष्टं क्षेमे शुभाभावे' इत्यभिधानात् ।
तदन्यदरिष्टं = शुभं, अमृतास्वादमित्यर्थः ।
यत्किञ्चित्क्रियते तत् स्वाधिष्ठानगतोऽग्निः अनुवेधति = सहायं
करोति ।

अतश्च अभ्यासवशात् वायुना अग्निं प्रज्वाल्य अग्निशिखानुविद्ध–विलीनचन्द्रमण्डलगलत्पीयूषधारानुभवे पञ्चविंशतितत्त्वातीता परमेश्वरी इति ज्ञातुं सुशकमित्युपदेशः ।।

25 (A)

अस्य मन्त्रस्य भास्कररायकृत भाष्यम् ।

कुः = पृथ्वीतत्वं म्रियते = लीयते यस्मिंस्तत्कुलकुण्डं = कुमारं, तत्संबन्धिनी कुमारी = कुलकुण्डलिनी ।

मन्द्रयते = मन्द्रस्वरेण नदति ।

अत एव रोदनावस्थासाहित्यात्कुलकुण्डादुत्थापनस्योत्पत्तिरूपत्वाच्च सद्य उत्पन्ना कुमारीत्युच्यते ।

योषित् = तरुणी, तारुण्यलक्षणसूर्येणानाहतादुपरिभागे साहित्यात् ।

पतिव्रता = पतिं ब्रह्मरन्ध्रस्थं कामेश्वरं व्रतयति = भुङ्क्ते ।

'पयोव्रतं ब्राह्मणस्य' इत्यादिप्रयोगात् ।

एवं कौमारतारुण्यसंभोगैररिष्टं शुभं पीयूषवर्षणरूपमन्यदपि यत्किंचित्सा क्रियते = करोति तत्सर्वमग्निः = स्वाधिष्ठानगतः ।

अनुवेधति = साधयति ।

अग्निज्वलनेनैव चन्द्रमण्डलद्रवादिति भावः ।

एतदुपबृंहणं सनत्कुमारतन्त्रे ।

'पृश्नयो नाम मुनयः श्रीविद्योपासका मिथः संभूयोपदिशन् ।
एतामुत्थापयत मा चिरम् ।
कर्णिकायामधिष्ठाने वह्निमिच्छथ भारताः ।
सूर्येण सह विद्राव्य राज्ञः सोमस्य तृप्यत' इत्यादि ।

'पातिव्रत्ये भुजंगम्या अग्निरेव सहायवान्' इत्यन्तम् ।

एवं—

'लोकस्य द्वारमर्चिमत्पवित्रम् ।

ज्योतिष्मद्भ्राजमानं महस्वत् ।

अमृतस्य धारा बहुधा दोहमानम् ।

चरणं नो लोके सुधितान्दधातु' इति मन्त्रोऽपि ।

लोकस्य = ब्रह्मलोकस्य ।

द्वारं = साधनम् ।

अर्चिर्ज्योतिर्महःशब्दा अग्निसूर्यचन्द्रकलावाचकाः ।

चरणशब्दश्चरति यातायातं करोतीति व्युत्पत्त्या कुण्डलिनीपरः ।

'सामान्ये नपुंसकम्' ।

सुधितान् = तृप्तान् ।

हकारस्य धकारादेशोऽर्चिःशब्दे सकारलोपश्च छान्दसः ।

कुर्वति = अस्मान् तृप्तान् करोतु इत्यर्थः ।

कुण्डलिनी अग्न्यादिस्थानमागतासती सुधावृष्टिं कुर्वत्यस्मांस्तृप्तान्करोत्वित्यर्थः ।

तदिदमुपबृंहितं शुक्रसंहितायाम् ।

'पावकस्यार्चिषा भानोर्ज्योतिषा महसा विधोः ।

दोहमाना सुधाधारा द्विसप्ततिसहस्रधा ।

गुप्ताचारा कुण्डलिनी तृप्तानस्मांस्तनोतु सा' इति ।

अत्र गुप्तं यथातथा चरतीति चरणपदस्यार्थः ।

एवं वसिष्ठादितन्त्रेष्वप्युपबृंहणानि द्रष्टव्यानि ॥

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चक्रविद्योपासनं वर्णिनां आश्रमिणां ज्ञानिनामज्ञानिनां च फल-दायकमित्यभिसन्धायाहुः—

अशृतासश्शृतासश्च । यज्वानो येप्ययज्वनः ।
स्वर्यन्तो नापेक्षन्ते ।।

अयमर्थः—

अशृतासः = अपक्वाः । अक्षपितान्तःकरणकलमषा इत्यर्थः ।

शृतासश्च = पक्वाश्च — 'आज्जसेरसुक्' इत्यसुगागमः, क्षपितान्तः-करणकलमषा इत्यर्थः ।

यज्वानः = यजनशीलाः, त्रैवर्णिकाः आश्रमिणश्च ।

अयज्वनः = यागरहिताः शूद्रादयः ।

'तस्माच्छूद्रो यज्ञेऽनवक्लृप्तः' इति श्रुतिः त्रैवर्णिकैकनियताधिकार-यज्ञशब्दवाच्याग्निष्टोमादिपरा ।

चक्रविद्योपासने शूद्राणामपि अधिकारचोदनात् ।

निषादस्थपतिवत् वैदिके कर्मण्यधिकारसिद्धेः न काचित् क्षतिः ।

यन्तः, इण् गतौ, चक्रविद्यामवगच्छन्तः स्वः = स्वर्गं नापेक्षन्ते ।।

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चक्रविद्योपासनाव्यतिरेकेण देवतान्तरोपासनायामनिष्टमाहुः—

इन्द्रमग्निं च ये विदुः। सिकता इव संयन्ति ।
रश्मिभिः समुदीरिताः। अस्माल्लोकादमुष्माच्च ।।

अयमर्थः—

सुरासुरमुख्यवन्दितचरणारविन्दायाः सर्वभूतान्तर्यामिन्याः सर्वव्यापिन्याः जगदुत्पत्तिस्थितिलयहेतोश्चक्रविद्याया अन्यत्वेन

ये इन्द्रमग्निं ।

चकारात् यमादिलोकपालान् पृथिव्यादिसदाशिवान्ततत्वानि च ।

उपास्यत्वेन ये विदुः ।

ते सिकता इव = वालुकाकणा इव ।

संयन्ति = परस्परं विरलाः = भ्रष्टा भवेयुरित्यर्थः ।

किञ्च—

रश्मिभिः = यमपाशैः ।

उत्तरप्रबन्धे 'अपेत वीत' इत्यादौ प्रतिपादितैः ।

समुदीरिताः = संयता = बद्धा भवेयुः इत्यर्थः ।

किञ्च—

अस्माल्लोकात् अमुष्माल्लोकाच्च भ्रष्टा भवेयुरिति शेषः ।

अत एव श्रुत्यन्तरम्—

'अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽविद्यामुपासते' ॥

अयमर्थः—

अविद्यां = विद्याविरुद्धां ज्ञानमार्गविरुद्धां इन्द्रादिसेवां ।

'वाचं धेनुमुपासीत' इत्येवमध्यारोपितसेवां च ये कुर्वते ते अविद्वांसः ।

अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति = अन्धतामिस्रं प्रविशन्तीत्यर्थः ।

चकारः प्रकरणसमाप्तिद्योतकः ॥

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ऋषिभिरदात् पृश्निभिः ॥

पृश्निनामभिः ऋषिभिः एतत्सर्वमदात् = अदायि ।

कर्मणि लुङ् ।

कर्मणि प्रत्ययलोपः ।

कर्तृप्रत्ययव्यत्ययश्च छान्दसः ।

ऋषिभिः पृश्निभिरेवमुक्तमित्यर्थः ।

यद्वा—

पृश्निभिः ऋषिभिः सहितः ऋषिसङ्घः एवमदात्, वाचमिति शेषः, उक्तवानित्यर्थः ॥

सव्याख्या अरुणोपनिषत् समाप्ता ॥

PART 2

ARUṆOPANIṢAT

(Translated into English with the Commentary)

Aruṇopaniṣat

(Translated into English with the commentary)

Section 1

In the Rudrayamala thc (followiug) additional verses are revealed:–

All the Pṛśni sages have taken refuge in Śrīcakra. They are worshippers of the Śrīcakra which is being adored by the Devas and the Gandharvas.

The Śrīcakra is of the form of Agni and the Moon. The Universe is (also) of the form of Agni and the Moon. The Sun (which is not separately mentioned here) is included in Agni and (therefore) Agni and the Moon alone are mentioned (here explicitly).

The Matṛkacakra (Śrīcakra) is threefold (known as) that which is related to the Moon, that which is related to the Sun and that which is related to Agni. The (small) triangle (immediately found around Bindu) and the Bindu are related to the Moon. The (group of) eight triangles are related to both.

The (group of) ten triangles belong similarly to the Moon. The (group of) fourteen triangles belong to Agni. The (three) quadrangular lines belong to the Sun.

Indra and other (gods), the eight Vasus and the Marut groups are (prosperous) because of the grace of this cakra. All those persons who are thriving in this world are (essentially) the worshippers of Tripuracakra (Śrīcakra).

The threefold cities of the Śrīcakra are the Moon, the Sun and Agni. The city of Mahalakṣmī is the Śrīcakra and there remains (permanently) Sadaśiva (the Supreme Being).

Section 2

The Śruti i.e., Aruṇopaniṣad of the Taittirīya (Āraṇyaka) beginning from (the mantra) इमा नुकं भुवना सीषधेम and ending with (the mantra) ऋषिभिरदात् पृश्निभिः conveys the same idea (as found in the above quoted Rudrayamala passages).

As (the Upaniṣad) deals with (the Goddess) Aruṇa, it is called Aruṇopaniṣat.

The Aruṇopaniṣad which begins with (the invocation) भद्रं कर्णेभिः and ends with (the mantra) तपस्वी पुण्यो भवति deals only with Aruṇa.

Aruṇaketu, the seer, revealed this Aruṇopaniṣat (for us after it was originally revealed by the Pṛśni sages).

Section 3

The meaning of the Veda is this:—

इमा नुकं भुवना सीषधेम ।

The meaning is this:—
The Pṛśni sages held consultations with one another.
सीषधेम — we (the Pṛśni sages) understand (that)
इमा — इमां — this Śrīcakra
नुकं — in all probability
भुवना — is the worlds.
The meaning is this:— We the Pṛśni sages, on conjecture understand that these worlds are established in their proper places because they worshipped Śrīcakra.
OR
We the Pṛśni sages, on enquiry, understand that the Śrīcakra is identical with these worlds.
According to Amara (The Traditional Sanskrit Dictionary) 'नु' is used to indicate 'Conjecture' or 'enquiry').
See Amara, Nanartha Varga, line 2831).

Section 4

इन्द्रश्च विश्वे च देवाः ॥

The meaning of this statement (mantra) is clear (and so it does not require any further exposition).
The (above mantra is incomplete and the following words are to be added to complete its sense):—
Having worshipped the Śrīcakra, Indra and Viśvedevas are (prosperous).

Section 5

यज्ञं च नस्तन्वं च प्रजां च ।
आदित्यैरिन्द्रः सह सीषधातु ॥

The meaning is this:—
आदित्यैः सह इन्द्रः — (let) Indra along with the Maruts
यज्ञं (नः) — (protect our) Agniṣṭoma and other sacrifices
तन्वं (नः) — (protect our) body. (This may also mean) wife (patnī) who is half of husband's body
प्रजां (नः) — (protect our) progeny
च (नः) — (protect our) all (other forms of) wealth (not mentioned in the above given list, Agniṣṭoma etc).

Indra, along with the Maruts, is one who has obtained Aiśvarya (prosperity including mastery) by his worship of Śrīcakra.

सीषधातु — (This word may be interpreted in two ways:—

1. Let Indra be (more prosperous or, Indra has become prosperous (already).
2. Indra has become prosperous by teaching us the Cakravidya (The tradition associated with and practised by the Śrīvidya followers)

The word Sīṣadhatu which is a 'Lot' (an imperative) is employed here to denote 'the arrival of appropriate occasion or time' for Indra to teach us the knowledge and tradition of Śrīvidya.

Section 6

आदित्यैरिन्द्रः सगणो मरुद्भिः ।
अस्माकं भूत्वविता तनूनाम् ॥

The meaning of the two mantras may be explained as follows:—

इन्द्रः — Indra (along with his Marut or Āditya group)

भूतु — is

अस्माकं — our

अविता — protector

तनूनाम् — (of our) sons, (of our) friends and (of our) wives

The intended meaning is this:—

Indra alone is the accomplisher of our yogakṣema (attainment of what we do not have and security in what we have).

Section 7

आप्लवस्व प्रप्लवस्व ॥

In this mantra the Pṛśni sages praise the Śrīcakra.

आ — from foot to head

प्लवनम् — (after getting drenched by the flow of Ambrosia

प्र — in a special way

प्लवनम् — soak the 72000 paths of the Naḍis (nerves) of our body (in a special way).

(The meaning is) : get drenched from head to foot by the Ambrosial flow (of the Sahasrāra centre and soak the 72000 Naḍis in a special way (by the Ambrosial flow).

Section 8

आण्डीभव ज मा मुहुः ॥

आण्डी — (This indicates) both the individual bodies (possessed by human and other beings) and the universal body (possessed by the Goddess).

The word आण्डी is a word ending with 'Cvi' Taddhita affix (which signifies the taking place of something which was not so before).

भव — lead me in such a way that our individual bodies become identical with your body (i.e. the body of the goddess) which is universal in size.

Therefore, आण्डी भव means : grant us oneness with you, O, mother.

ज — to understand

मुहुर्मा अवगच्छ -- bless us repeatedly (in such a way that we understand that we are identical with you).

अज — this is a verbal root meaning 'To understand'.

In the above mantra the word Aja appears without its 'A'. The dropping of 'A' from Aja is the peculiarity of the Vedic (language).

Section-9

सुखादीं दुःखनिधनाम् ।।

The meaning is this:–

सुखादि — the enjoyer or the grantor or the accomplisher of Ānanda.

इन्दुः — the Moon

Here the word INDU refers to the Moon which resides in the spiritual centre of the body known as 'Bindu'.

खनिधनां — one who considers Kham (i.e. the abode of Bindu) as the most precious wealth (superior to all other forms of wealth).

OR,

सुखादीं — one who excels in Ānanda or the one who is of the form of Ānanda.

दुःखनिधनां — the abode of the goddess in which suffering gets destroyed (automatically).

The meaning of the above mentioned mantra is:—
She is the one who never experiences any tinge of suffering.
OR,

सुखादीं — 'सु' means 'Auspeciousness'. 'ख' means the sense organs or the mind. 'आदि' means the origin.

This means : she is the one who understands even the deepest mind.

दुःखनिधनां — means one who is beyond the reach of the bad senses like the eyes etc.

Section 10

प्रतिमुञ्चस्व स्वां पुरम् ॥

प्रतिमुञ्चस्व — take refuge in
पुरम् — the body
स्वां पुरम् — of the goddess

Section 11

मरीचयः स्वायंभुवाः ॥

The meaning is this:—
मरीचयः — the rays
भुवाः — that are born
स्वयं — out of the goddess

(The mantra which is incomplete is to be supplied with) the following words:— the rays that are born out of the Goddess, stand enveloping the entire worlds.
It will be explained later that the shining nature of the Sun, Moon and Agni is (actually) due to the grace of the rays born from the goddess.

Section 12

ये शरीराण्यकल्पयन् ॥

The meaning is this:—

ये — the rays which are 360 in number

अकल्पयन् — make

शरीराणि — the Time, consisting of 360 days of the year

The Veda (Taittirīya Brahmaṇa 1.6.2) says : Verily, the year is Prajapati.

Section 13

ते ते देहं कल्पयन्तु ॥

ते — the rays

ते — of you, the Goddess

देहं कल्पयन्तु — let (the rays) make the body or let (the rays) take resort in the body of the Goddess).

The word 'body' (here) means the 'feet' of the Goddess which are part of her body.

Thus it means:— The rays are born out of the feet of the Goddess.

Section 14

मा च ते ख्या स्म तीरिषत् ॥

ते — your

ख्या — fame (and in this context it means) knowledge.

मा च तीरिषत् — let (it) not abandon us.

The meaning is:— let the knowledge pertaining to you become accomplised in us always.

Section 15

From this mantra onwards the Pṛśni sages interested in the practice of Śrīvidya (worship) consult one another.

Section 16

उत्तिष्ठत मा स्वप्त ।
अग्निमिच्छध्वं भारताः ॥
राज्ञः सोमस्य तृप्तासः ।
सूर्येण सयुजोषसः ॥

The meaning of the ṛk is this:–

हे भारताः — भा — भायां — in the light

रताः — O, those who are interested in the worship (of Śrīcakra)

This means 'those who are interested in Śrīcakra which is in the form of bha (light) (are called) Bharatas.

OR

भारत्याः — persons who are interested in Sarasvatī who is identifiable with Śrīvidya.

In accordance with the general rule (of Grammar) that a rule laid down in a general manner, may be restricted by a special rule afterwards, the word 'bharataḥ' has been explained in this context.

(The people of bharatavarṣa are called so because all the Indians are interested in bharatī, also known as Śrīvidya).

हे भारताः — O, devotees of Śrīvidya

उत्तिष्ठत — begin the worship (of Śrīvidya)

मा स्वप्त — do not be indifferent

अग्निमिच्छध्वं — inflame the fire which is found in your Svadhiṣṭhana centre.

राज्ञः — of the Moon

सोमस्य — associated with Uma (sa + uma = Soma)

As the Devī is present in the Bindu which is inside the orb of the Moon, Candra (Moon) is called Soma.

तृप्तासः — be satisfied with the flow of the Moon

सयुजा — (which is) united with the Sun (which is in between Agni and the Moon)

सूर्येण — the sun which is stationed in between Anahata (heart centre) and Visuddhi (throat centre)

OR

The syntactical order would be:

सूर्येण सयुजा राज्ञा तृप्तास:

The above sentence would mean:— pleased with the king (Candra) who is united with the Sun

Of what nature?

उषस: — those who have burnt down their afflictions which are in the forms of maya

('uṣ' means — to burn)

OR

उषस: — those who are engaged in the early morning meditation

(It is a well-known fact that) the meditation and other rites pertaining to the Goddess, are prescribed to be done (by the ritual texts) only during the early morning period (uṣaḥ kala).

Section 16 (A)

BHĀSKARARĀYA'S COMMENTARY ON THIS MANTRA

There is (ample) evidence to hold that this (Aruṇopaniṣat) is entirely devoted to the Goddess.

One of the 1000 names of the Śyamala Sahasranama says that she is sung by Aruṇopaniṣat.

(The mantras of the Aruṇopaniṣat) are the expressions of the Pṛśni sages who revealed (the mantras) after mutual consultations.

Bharatī is also known as Sarasvatī. Bharatas are those who are connected with Bharatī.

O, devotees of Śrīvidya.

उत्तिष्ठत — engage yourselves in the system of worship of Śrīvidya.

मा स्वप्त — do not be indifferent

The two (verbal) roots (Uttiṣṭh and Svap) will have to be taken to contain within themselves inherently the causative force to connect them with the actions of Kuṇḍalinī.

अग्नि इच्छध्वम् — raise the Kuṇḍalinī which is shining in the Svadhiṣṭhana centre, by the stick of (strong) will (power).

उषस: — melt by the heat of Agni (which is in the Svadhiṣṭhana centre).

सूर्येण सयुजा — coupled with (the hot rays of) the Sun which is in between the Anahata and Visuddhi centres.

राज्ञ: सोमस्य — to the king of kings who is inside the Candra maṇḍala of the Sahasrara centre along with the queen of queens, Uma.

तृप्तास: — be pleased with the ambrosia (flowing from the Sahasrara centre)

(The meaning is) : kindle the Agnikuṇḍalinī and unite it with the Sūryakuṇḍalinī. With the help of these two (Agni and Sūrya) melt the union of Śiva and Śakti who reside in the Candra Maṇḍala of the Bindu. Fill the Ambrosia in (all) your 72000 Naḍis. And be pleased with the Ambrosial flow oozing out from the Sahasrara centre.

The sūtra of Paṇinī Ājjaserasuk (7.1.50) explains that the word tṛptasaḥ is formed by adding the ASUK augment.

Section 17

From now onwards the Pṛśni sages instruct us about the materials required for the (Śrīcakra) pūja.

युवा सुवासा ॥

युवा — the strong - limbed, the healthy (persons)

सुवासा —the clean clothes or the white clothes.

The clean or the white clothes are symbolic of worthy or white ornaments, white flowers etc.

(The mantra which is incomplete should be completed like this):— one should undertake to do the (Śrīcakra) pūja having worn the white or worthy clothes, ornaments etc.

Section 18

The nature of Śrīcakra is explained in this mantra.

अष्टाचक्रा नवद्वारा ॥

The eight cakras are:— the (set of) eight (central) triangles, the (set of) twin ten triangles, the (set of) fourteen triangles, the (set of) eight lotuses, the (set of) sixteen lotuses, the three circles and the square (consisting of three lines).

नवद्वारा — the nine gates (or openings) in the form of triangles

Section 19

देवानां पूरयोध्या ॥

देवानां — pertaining to gods and others

पूः — the Śrīvidya city adored by the devas

OR

As (the Śrīcakra) is three fold (in the forms of) Soma, Sūrya and Agni, it may refer to the cities of the Sun, Moon and Agni.

The singular form (of pūḥ) is used to denote that it is an aggregate of the three cities.

अयोध्या — that which is beyond the reach, especially, of those who are less fortunate.

Section 20

तस्याँ हिरण्मयः कोशः ।
स्वर्गो लोको ज्योतिषावृतः ॥

The meaning is this:—

तस्यां (पुरि) — in the middle of the Śrīcakra there is a golden treasure in the form of 1000 petalled lotus which is in the Bindu.

The Svargaloka is enveloped by the brightness of the treasure.

ज्योतिर्लोकः — the heaven

Section 20(A)

BHĀSKARARĀYA'S COMMENTARY ON THIS MANTRA

In the Śaunaka Branch of the Atharva Veda the mantra is declared (as stated above). But the special feature between this and the Taittirīya school is that the Taittirīya school has only the first two lines (of the above quoted four-lined mantra).

The eight cakras and the nine triangles (referred to here) are those which begin from the Trailokya mohana cakra to Sarvasiddhiprada cakra.

This is beyond the reach of others (= those who are less fortunate).

This is the abode of the Devas.

This is the city of the Srīcakra.

In this city there is an excellent treasure.

It is in the form of Light.

It is on a par with the heaven.

And it is called the triangle.

In this triangle there is the Bindu which is the unification of the Three.

In this Bindu cakra there is a big substance resembling the Self.

Knowers understand it (= Self) as the Brahman.

The overall meaning is this: The Brahman enters into that city known as Aparajita.

And it is qualified by the adjectives 'shining' etc.

There is a city known as Aparajita which is attainable by the upasakas of Brahman.

Those who reach the city never come back (to this world by taking a birth).

At the end of the commentary on the Brahma Sūtra (Ch. Up. VIII. 5, 3.) Śrī Śankara Bhagavad Pada describes that in that city of Aparajita there are two lakes known as 'Amara' and 'Ṇya' which are full of ambrosia.

The Śrīcakra is different from this (referred to by Śrī Śankara).

The adjective 'Tripratiṣṭhite' does not qualify the word 'Trayara' for the fact that it would go against the double usage of the word 'Tasmin' (in the above quoted mantra.) Therefore the adjective (Tripratiṣṭhite) should be taken to qualify the word 'Bindu. By this it may be seen that the Bindu cakra clearly indicates the unification of the Three.

Section 21

Now the Pṛśni sages make a mention of the fruit of the worship of Śrīcakra.

यो वै तां ब्रह्मणो वेद ।
अमृतेनावृतां पुरीम् ।
तस्मै ब्रह्म च ब्रह्मा च ।
आयुः कीर्तिं प्रजां ददुः ॥

The meaning is this:—

यो वेद — he who worships (the Śrīcakra) preceded by (the necessary knowledge of the tradition associated with Śrīvidya)

ब्रह्मणः — of the Goddess who is of the form of Brahman

पुरीं — in the city of Śrīcakra that belongs to Tripura

तां अमृतेन आवृतां — (knowing) her as enveloped by the ambrosia of the Candra maṇḍala about which mention has already been made.

तस्मै विदुषे — for that worshipper who is a scholar

ब्रह्म च — the Goddess who is identifiable with Brahman

ब्रह्मा च — Brahma who is identifiable with the God, (the masculine) Brahman.

The two च — karas employed (in this mantra) denote the union of the both (Śiva and Śakti).

The two in a combined manner live in the Cintamaṇi house (which is) in the island of precious stones (which is) in the middle of the ambrosial ocean (which is) in the Sahasrara centre (and which is in the) abode of the Bindu.

Let these two (Śiva and Śakti)

ददुः — grant (to the worshippers)

आयुः — (long) life

कीर्ति — fame (and)

प्रजां — progeny

The usage of singular - plural (in an irregular way) in this mantra is justified by the (Paṇinīyan sūtra) व्यत्ययो बहुलम् (3.1.85) which means that it is the peculiarity of the Vedic language.

Section 22

It is now explained that Śiva and Śakti live here itself (i'e. in the Bindu).

विभ्राजमानां हरिणीम् ।
यशसा संपरीवृताम् ॥

पुरँ हिरण्मयीं ब्रह्मा ।
विवेशापराजिता ॥

The meaning of the Ṛk is this:–

विभ्राजमानां — She who is shining with millions of rays

हरिणीं — of golden colour

The Veda (i.e. Śrīsūkta) says that She (the Goddess) is of golden colour and of golden form.

यशसा संपरीवृताम् — enveloped by fame

The meaning is this:– whoever be the persons who are famous in this world, all of them are famous because of the grace of the Goddess.

The Veda (T.U i.e. Maha Narayaṇa Upaniṣad, 21.1) says:–

'Let Brahma who is identifiable with Sadaśiva be ever auspecious to us'

On the authority of the Veda (quoted above) the equation of masculine word 'Brahma' with Sadaśiva shows that they are the same (personalities).

विवेश — the Aparajita, Sadakhya and Candrakala (all meaning Śrīvidya) enter (into the Bindu).

By these two sentences we are reminded of the fact that there is difference in the manner of entry (into the Bindu) by both these (Śiva and Śakti).

It is said:–

In the Bindu (which is) in the Cintamaṇi house, Sadaśiva is ever present. (But) the Aparajita (also known as) Kuṇḍalinī Power enters into it (i e. the Bindu) having pierced the six cakras (Mūladhara, Svadhiṣthana etc).

Section 23

The mode of stay of Śiva and Śakti in this (Bindu) cakra is explained here.

पराङेत्यज्यामयी ।
परङेत्यनाशकी ॥

The meaning is this:—

पराङ् — (the Goddess) who is in the form of the (triangular) cakras

While comparing Śiva with Śakti, (we may ascertain that) Śakti is—

अज्यामयी — without 'ज्यानि' i.e. without destruction, permanent, bereft of suffering and blissful

एति — is

OR

अज्यामयी — 'ज्या' means 'Earth'. By this (earth) all the five elements (Bhūtas) are indicated. She is called अज्यामयी because she is not of the form of the Bhūtas, but she is of the form of manas etc.

This means that She is of the form of the four triangles (usually) identified with Śiva.

It is wellknown that the Śiva triangles (of the Śrīcakra) appear with their apex facing downwards just below the Bindu.

अनाशकी — the Goddess who has no destruction.

In comparison with the Śiva triangles, the Śakti triangles appear to be facing downwards.

In this way the mutual upwardness and downwardness of the Śiva and Śakti triangles may be understood while drawing the (Śrī) cakra. That is why (the above) mantra says;— पराङ् एति which means she whose triangles are with their apex downwards.

पराङ् here means अधोमुखी — with downward face.

Section 24

This mantra explains the fruit obtainable by the knowers (of the Śrīvidya tradition).

इह चामुत्र चान्वेति ।
विद्वान् देवासुरानुभयान् ।।

देवा: are those who have a shining nature (this means) the eleven sense organs

असुरा: — 'असव:' means the five vital airs. By this the five तन्मात्रा: — are meant as they originate the Prāṇa and the other four (total : FIVE) vital airs.

उभयान् — in both (locations) relating to the Devas and the Asuras i.e., Māyā. Suddhavidyā, Maheśvara and Sadāśiva.

The scholar who, after having known the evolutes of the 25 tatvas, realizes that the 26th tatva is different from the 25 tatvas, and also realizes that the 26th tatva is the union of Śiva and Śakti (then) becomes (the real) scholar. (Still) due to the gradation of the pūjā undertaken by these scholars in this world there is difference among such scholars. (Similarly due to their difference in the matter of personal spiritual advancement) even in the other world (after leaving their physical body) (these scholars) are united with five types of muktis namely, Sārṣṭi Sālokya, Sāmīpya, Sārūpya and Sāyujya.

The nature of Sārṣṭi and others will be explained later on

Section 25

Now the means to learn both the Devas and the Asuras are explained.

यत्कुमारी मन्द्रयते ।
यद्योषिद्यत्पतिव्रता ।।

अरिष्टं यत्किच क्रियते ।
अग्निस्तदनुवेधति ॥

The meaning is this:—

There are three stages in the evolution of Kuṇḍalinī power (kumarī, yoṣit and pativrata)

यत्कुमारी मन्द्रयते — in the Mūladhara cakra kumarī, having assumed the form of Kumara, makes a low (murmuring) sound. (This is because) kuṇḍalinī is of the form of a snake. (It is wellknown that the snake as soon as it wakes up from sleep makes a low (murmuring) sound. Kuṇḍalinī being of the form of a snake acts like a snake. (This is the stage of kumarī)

यद्योषित् — the yoṣit (a bit grown-up girl) reaching upto the level of viṣṇu granthi (again) makes a sound.

(In support of this) Sanatkumara text says:

The kulayoṣit (i.e. the yoṣit) leaving the kula (i.e. the Mūladhara) and reaching the Viṣṇu knot makes a sound (either) for the sake of breaking the Viṣṇu's knot (or) after having broken the Viṣṇu's knot.

पतिव्रता — (the same kuṇḍalinī power, now having assumed the role of) pativrata sports with her husband in the Sahasradala kamala (1000 petalled lotus).

The world Riṣṭa according to the dictionary (Amara Nanartha Varga, 2406) means both 'welfare' and 'what is opposite of auspeciousness'.

(Here the commentator wants to take the word in the sense 'opposite to auspeciousness'.)

Riṣṭa is inauspeciousness and Ariṣṭa is auspeciousness and (therefore here it means) the sweet ambrosia.

Whatever little thing is done (by the kuṇḍalinī) the Agni which is in the Svadhiṣṭhana, assists.

अनुवेधति — helps

The instruction here is this:— Therefore the worshipper should try to kindle the Agni by repeated practice of breath control. He must try to melt the Candra maṇḍala by the flames of the Agni. Then he must try to experience the flow of ambrosia (oozing out from the Candra maṇḍala of the Bindu).

By this the worshipper can easily understand that the Supreme Goddess is beyond the 25th tatva.

Section 25(A)

BHĀSKARARĀYA'S COMMENTARY ON THIS MANTRA

कुमारी — Kuṇḍalinī. 'ku' means the Pṛthvī Tatva. The place in which Pṛthvī Tatva is dissolved (mriyate) is Kumāra which means Kulakuṇḍa. That which is related to Kumāra is Kumārī which means Kulakuṇḍalinī.

मन्द्रयते — (kumārī) makes a low (murmuring) sound. Therefore Kulakuṇḍa is that which is associated with the state of crying and Kumārī is one who has suddenly risen from the Kulakuṇḍa.

योषित् — The young girl (taruṇī). Taruṇī is called so because she unites herself with the Sun who is known as tāruṇya just above the Anāhata centre.

पतिव्रता — one who enjoys Kāmeśvara, her husband, at the Brahmarandhra centre.

व्रतयति — one who enjoys. (= feeds himself)

The usage of the word 'Vrata' in the sense of (feeding) 'enjoying' may be seen in (the sentence) "The enjoyment of 'payas' is that of the Brahmin".

In this way she is auspecious by her union with kaumāra and tāruṇya (in the mūlādhāra and just above the anāhata centres).

Whatever she (kuṇḍalinī) does in order to shower the ambrosia (from the Bindu centre), all this is assisted by the Agni of Svadhiṣṭhana centre.

अनुवेधति — accomplishes

The intention is that the liquidization of the Candra maṇḍala becomes possible only by the flame of the Agni (of the Svadhiṣṭhana centre).

Statements that support this idea are available in the Sanat-kumara Tantra beginning from the following:—

"The Pṛśni sages are the worshippers of Śrīvidya. They after consulting one another instruct us (as hereunder):—
"Arouse her (the Kuṇḍalinī) quickly. O, Bharatas, desire the Agni at the Svadhiṣṭhana centre. Melt (the Candra maṇḍala) along with the (heat of the) Sun and be pleased with (the ambrosia) of the king Soma."

And ending with the following statement:—

"In the enjoyment of the Kuṇḍalinī with her husband, Agni alone is the helper."

[In the same way the mantras (of the Taittirīya Brahmaṇa 3-12-3) also say]:—

लोकस्य द्वारमर्चिमत्पवित्रम ।
ज्योतिष्मद्भ्राजमानं महस्वत् ।।
अमृतस्य धारा बहुधा दोहमानम् ।
चरणं नो लोके सुधितान्दधातु ।। इति मन्त्रोऽपि ।।

लोकस्य — To the world of the Brahman

द्वारं — this is the gateway

Arci = Jyoti = Mahas = Rays
Arci, Jyotiḥ, mahaḥ — These words indicate Agni, Sūrya and the Candra kalas respectively.

(The word) Caraṇa is derived from the verb 'carati' which means 'that which goes and comes', and on the basis of this (explanation) it means 'Kuṇḍalinī' (which also moves from Mūladhara to Sahasrara and from Sahasrara to Mūladhara).

(According to the Vartika of Katyayana under the Paninīan Sūtra 2-4-17) when the gender of any particular word cannot be determined, the word may be used in neuter gender. Following the above quoted dictum, the word 'caraṇa' is employed in neuter gender.

सुधितान् — Those who are satisfied

(The original word was SUHITĀN but later on it was changed to SUDHITĀN). The substitution of 'DHA' for 'HA' (is explained in Paṇinīan Sūtra 7-4-45).

The dropping of 'S' from the end of the word 'ARCIS' is the peculiarity of the Vedic language.

The meaning of the (T.B 3-12-3) mantra is this:—

Let the kuṇḍalinī which comes from the abodes of Agni and other (centres) shower the ambrosia (from the Sahasrara centre) and make us (fully) satisfied.

In the Śukasamhita (also) the above mentioned ideas are supported:—

"By the rays of Agni, Bhanu and the Moon, let the secretly moving kuṇḍalinī make us satisfied by pouring the ambrosial flow in the 72000 Naḍis".

गुप्ताचारा means 'one who moves hither and thither' and it is denoted by the word 'Caraṇa'

Other supporting statements may be seen in Vasiṣṭha and other Tantras.

Section 26

It is now explained that the worship of Śrīcakra brings good fruits to those who belong to all castes, all aśramites all knowers and as well as all unknowers.

अशृतासश्शृतासश्च ।
यज्वानो येप्ययज्वनः ।
स्वर्यन्तो नापेक्षन्ते ॥

The meaning is this:—

अशृतासः — Those who are not yet ripe (Spiritually). That is, those whose dirt of the inner senses has not yet been exhausted.

शृतासश्च — Those who are ripe (Spiritually). That is, those whose dirt of the inner senses has been exhausted.

The 'Asuk' augment has been added to the words Aśṛtasaḥ and Śṛtasaḥ in accordance with the Paṇinīan Sūtra 7.1.50.

यज्वानः — Those who are qualified to perform the Vedic sacrifices (and this refers to the) three higher castes and the Āśramites.

अयज्वनः — Those who are not eligible to perform the Vedic sacrifices and (this refers to the) Śūdras and the other (so - called) lower castes.

The Vedic statement (T.S.7.1.1) 'therefore the Śūdra is not fit for sacrifice' is to be held as declaring only the eligibility of the three higher caste people and the word 'Yajña' (restricts itself only to the) Vedic sacrifices like Agniṣṭoma. The Śūdras have authority to undertake Śrividya upasana and worship.

There is no harm if they (the Śūdras) become eligible (even) for the Vedic rites under the dictum of Niṣadasthapati. The word यन्त: is derived from the root 'इण्' to understand.
यन्त: — Those who (deeply) understand the tradition of Śrīvidya.
नापेक्षन्ते — do not care for
स्व: — the heaven

Section 27

It is now explained that the worship of other gods without the Śrīvidya worship is useless and harmful.

इन्द्रमग्नि च ये त्रिदु: ।
सिकता इव संयन्ति ॥
रश्मिभि: समुदीरिता: ।
अस्माल्लोकादमुष्माच्च ॥

The meaning is this:–

The two lotus feet of the Goddess are adored by the chiefs of the Gods and the Asuras. She is the indweller of all the Beings. She pervades every object. She is the cause of creation, maintenance and dissolution. She is Śrīvidya.

ये इन्द्रमग्नि — Those who worship Indra and Agni

च — the direction - protectors like Yama and others, (and also) the Tatvas starting from Pṛthvī down to Sadaśiva.

The meaning is:– If anybody worships Indra, Agni, Yama and others, as well as the Tatvas Pṛthvī to Sadaśiva, as different from the Goddess and as fit for adoration, they become mutually loose and they fall down like the sand particles.

Moreover, they become bound by the noose of Yama.

सिकता इव — Like sand particles

संयन्ति — Become separated from one another or become fallen.

रश्मिभि: — by the noose of Yama

समुदीरिता: — bound

This idea is expressed in the mantra Apeta Vīta (T.A 1.27.117) and others.

Moreover, they become fallen from this world as well as from the other worlds.

That is why in another Śruti it is said:—

Those who meditate on Avidya enter into pitch darkness (IŚA. UP.9).

The meaning is this:—

अविद्यां — That which is opposite to Vidya, that is, that which is opposite to the path of knowledge.

They are unknowers who meditate on the basis of superimposed ideas such as 'one should meditate on speech as a cow' (Bṛ. Up. 5-8-1). These people enter into pitch darkness.

च (employed in the above-mentioned mantra No.27) indicates that the (Aruṇopaniṣad) has come to an end.

Section 28

ऋषिभिरदात् पृश्निभि: ॥

All these were proclaimed by the sages named Pṛśnis.

अदात् — अदायि ।

The peculiar usage of the Aiorist, the dropping of the pratyaya, the irregular usage of the agent pratyaya are due to Vedic peculiarities.

This means:— Thus said by the Pṛśni sages.

OR

The assembly of the (entire) sages along with the Pṛśni sages, said like this.

अदात्: — said; proclaimed.

HERE ENDS THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE COMMENTARY

⁂

PART 3

ARUṆOPANIṢAT

(with elaborate exposition in English)

Aruṇopaniṣat

(with elaborate exposition in English)

Section 1

The actual text of the Aruṇopaniṣad starts with the mantra 'imā nukam bhuvanā-sīṣadhema' which is quoted and annotated in Section 3 hereunder. The commentator instead of starting his commentary directly from the first mantra, must have felt that there should be some kind of proper introduction to the Upaniṣad so that the readers would find it easy to understand the Upaniṣad in a better way. With this intention in mind the commentator adds some necessary remarks which have been classified as Section 1 and 2 in this book.

The whole of the first Section is a quotation taken from the Rudrayāmala. The commentator has chosen to quote only six verses from the Rudrayāmala. As it has already been remarked in the introductory remarks of this book, we do not know whether there are any other verses of this nature in the Rudrayāmala. Either the commentator has chosen to confine himself only to six verses of his choice or there are only these six verses available in the Rudrayāmala to be quoted as an introduction to this Upaniṣad. Unless the original Rudrayāmala text which seems to be lost now, is made available to us, we cannot come to any definite conclusion regarding the verses quoted here.

As far as the Aruṇopaniṣad text is concerned there is no mention of the name Pṛśni excepting in the last mantra which says that the Aruṇopaniṣad was revealed by the sages known as Pṛśnis. No other details about the sages are available to us in the Aruṇopaniṣad. Therefore

the commentator is inclined to quote some verses from the Rudrayamala in order to give more details about the Pṛśni sages.

The first verse quoted from the Rudrayamala says that Pṛśni sages are strong worshippers of Śrīvidya also known as Śrīcakra. It māy be noted in this connection that the words Śrīvidya and Śricakra are used in this Upanisat to denote the same idea.

After having given us the fact that the Pṛśni sages are deep devotees of the Śrīcakra the second line of the first verse brings out of the glory and greatness of the Śrīcakra by saying that the Śrīcakra is adored by all the Devas and the Gandharvas.

The words 'deva gandharva pūjitam' used in the first verse of the Rudrayamala may mean 'all the persons belonging to the classes of gods, semigods, sages and human beings etc.' The words may also specifically mean only the 'gods' and the 'Gandharvas'.

If it is used in a specific sense of 'gods' and the 'Gandharvas', then we may have to explain something about it.

Gods, in general, are associated with the constructive activities of the world and there are references in many texts to hold that the gods in general are worshippers of Śrīvidya.

In fact the leader of the gods, Indra, is one of the formost teachers of the Śrīvidya tradition and he himself is credited with Seership of one of the mūlamantras of the Devī. We also know that many gods in general have been worshippers of the Śrīvidya tradition. Therefore the words 'deva pūjitam' is justified in meaning 'gods' in general.

But what about the words 'Gandharva pūjitā'? Who are the prominent Śrīvidyā worshippers from the group of the Gandharvas? This question is not very easily answerable as we normally do not come across the names of the Gandharvas as worshippers of Śrīvidyā.

We have reference to the Gandharvas in almost all the texts like Ṛgveda, the Brāhmaṇas, the Epics and the Purāṇas. But in all these texts it is very difficult to find out a reference to the Gandharvas as worshippers of Śrīvidyā.

The Lalitā Sahasranāma (name 636) says that the Goddess is 'Gandharva sevitā' which means that the Gandharvas are in general the devotees of the Goddess. The great commentator of Lalitā Sahasranāma, Bhāskararāya, says that among other meanings, this means that She is attended by 'Viśvāvasu and others'. But we have no specific reference to a Gandharva being a worshipper of the Devī.

The Lalitā Triśatī (name 177) says that the Goddess is praised by the two Gandharvas 'Hāhā' and 'Hūhu'.

Excepting these occasional and general references we have no specific reference to explain any prominent or general Gandharva being a strong devotee of the Goddess.

Perhaps the tradition of referring to the Gandharvas as Devībhaktas was originally started by the earliest text Rudrayāmala and it was generally followed by the later Srīvidyā tradition without caring to illustrate any specific reference to any of the Gandharvas.

As we have earlier explained, the words 'deva gandharva pūjitam' may be taken to mean all worshippers of Śrīvidyā.

The second verse quoted from the Rudrayamala is very relevant to us in this context. The first half of the first line of the second verse says that the Śrīcakra consists of the elements of Agni, Soma and Sūrya. In many Śrīvidya texts we very often come across the fact that the Śrīcakra or Śrīvidya is 'threefold' from many points of view. But the division of Śrīcakra into three elements of Agni, Soma and Sūrya is a new idea and therefore the commentator is inclined to quote this verse from the Rudrayamala. This idea is explained further in the following lines quoted from the Rudrayamala.

According to the Rudrayamala the central triangle and the bindu are related to Soma (the Moon). The eight triangles that are immediately found around the central triangle belong to both. By the term 'both' the Rudrayamala seems to mean that the eight triangles belong both to Agni and Soma.

Similarly the two sets of ten-triangles (the inner ten and the outer ten found immediately around the eight triangles) are related to the Moon.

The fourteen triangles belong to Agni and the three-lined square found as the last external constituent of the Śrīcakra, belongs to the Sun.

In this connection the Rudrayamala says in the second line of the second verse that even though the Śrīcakra is thus threefold as Agni, Soma and Sūrya sometimes the Śrīcakra is said to be 'agnīṣomatmakam' which means that the cakra is twofold as Agni and Soma.

The 'twofold' reference to Agni and Soma should not be confused as contradictory to the 'threefold' division of Śrīcakra as Agni, Soma and Sūrya. According to the

Rudrayamala the Sun is included in Agni as both are hot substances. Therefore in some places only Agni and Soma are referred to explicitly and in such cases the threefold nature of the Śrīcakra is included in Agni and Soma for some spiritual purposes.

In fact the Śrīcakra is threefold as Agni, Soma and Sūrya whether Sūrya is explicitly mentioned or included in Agni.

In other words, the Śrīcakra consists of two hot elements, one represented by Agni and the other represented by the Sun. Similarly the Śrīcakra consists of one cold element represented by Soma (the Moon).

The two hot elements are necessary to melt the one cold element. This will be further elucidated when we explain some of the later mantras of the Aruṇopaniṣad. In this way the Rudrayamala passages are necessary to understand the mantras of the Aruṇopaniṣad.

The first line of the second verse of the Rudrayamala says that the Śrīcakra is of the form of Agni and Soma. Similarly the universe in which we live and which is seen in front of us also is of the form of Agni and Soma.

As an object consisting of Agni and Soma the Śrīcakra and the universe (consisting of many worlds) are identical. This relationship of identity existing between the Śrīcakra and the worlds is expressed in the first mantra of the Aruṇopaniṣad and therefore the commentator quotes this line from the Rudrayamala to point out the similar ideas expressed by these two texts.

Having explained some of the most important common features of the Śrīcakra and the worlds the Rudrayamala in the 5th verse comes to explain the greatness of the

Śrīcakra and the usefulness of the Śrīcakra to its sincere devotees.

The fifth verse says in the first line that Indra and others, the eight Vasus and the group of Marut (gaṇas) have become very prosperous because of the grace of this Śrīcakra.

The gods like Indra and others, the Vasus and Marut groups are referred to even in the earliest Veda known as Ṛgveda. In the whole of the Vedic literature as well as in the post - Vedic literature these personalities are frequently mentioned.

Although there may be individual differences among these personalities the commonness found among them is that the Vasus and the Maruts have accepted Indra as their master.

All these personalities, whether we take them individually or collectively, are very prosperous in many ways. All these prosperities are associated with them because the Śrīcakra has been pleased with them and it has showered its blessings on them.

After citing the specific example of Indra, Vasus and the Maruts the fifth verse makes a general but sweeping remark that whoever be the persons who are prosperous in this world they should have been directly or indirectly be the worshippers of Śrīcakra. The intention of the statement is to impress upon all of us that unless the Śrīcakra or Śrīvidya showers its blessings on any individual or group, the attainment and enjoyment of prosperity never becomes possible.

Here the word prosperity includes all types of prosperities like hard cash, immovable properties, relatives, friends, individual health, mental satisfaction and peace etc.

We will soon find that the same idea is repeated by the commentator in some places of his interpretations on the mantras of the Aruṇopaniṣad.

The last line of the sixth verse says that the Śrī-cakra is able to shower many types of prosperities to all its sincere devotees because it is actually the abode of Mahalakṣmī who is the owner and grantor of all types of propserities.

Here the word 'Mahalakṣmī' is to be taken to mean the Supreme Goddess Tripura or Lalita and it should not merely be taken to mean the wife of Mahaviṣṇu.

The last line further says that not only the Śrīcakra is the abode of the Supreme Goddess, but the Supreme Sadaśiva also lives there. This idea will be explained further in the mantra annotated in Section 23.

Section 2

As the Section 1 is introductory in nature, this Section (2) also is introductory in nature. Many of the ideas contained in the Sanskrit portion of Section 1 have been subjected to a critical examination in the Introductory remarks of this book. Therefore only very little facts are left to us for discussion in this Section.

In this connection we may take up the explanation on the word 'Aruṇopaniṣad' as dealt with by the commentator.

According to the commentator the Upaniṣad is called Aruṇopaniṣat because it deals with the Goddess known as Aruṇa. Although in the Śrīvidya tradition the

Goddess is more popularly known as Lalita or Tripurasundarī, in some of the Dhyana Ślokas on the Goddess, she is also called Aruṇa.

In the preliminary nyasa prescribed before the recitation of the Lalita Sahasranama one of the dhyana ślokas refer to her as

अरुणां करुणातरङ्गिताक्षीम् ।

Similarly, in the 16th verse of the Saundarya Laharī the second line refers to her as

भजन्ते ये सन्तः कतिचिदरुणामेव भवतीम् ।

which means "the few virtuous men worship thee, as red in colour, as of the rising Sun..."

Another dhyana śloka of the Lalita Sahasranama describes her as

सिन्दूरारुण विग्रहाम् ।

Instances may thus be multiplied to show that the Goddess is described in many texts as 'red in colour'. All these justify the statement of the commentator that she is Arnṇa and therefore the Upaniṣat which deals with her is naturally called Aruṇopaniṣat.

The interpretation of the commentator is very convincing that it cannot be rejected.

After justifying the term Aruṇopaniṣat, the commentator comes to discuss about the ṛṣi of the Aruṇopaniṣat.

It is usually the Indian tradition to mention about the particulars of the ṛṣi or ṛṣis associated with a particular Vedic text or Vedic passage.

According to the commentator of the Aruṇopaniṣat the ṛṣi of the Upaniṣat is Aruṇaketu who is accepted to be the author of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka. As the text known in the Śrīvidyā tradition as Aruṇopaniṣat, forms part of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka, naturally the same ṛṣi is accepted to be the author of the Aruṇopaniṣat also.

Even though the commentator has declared Aruṇaketu as the author of the Aruṇopaniṣat it is necessary to point out that the term 'author' is used here only in a restricted sense.

The commentator, on the authority of the last mantra of the Aruṇopaniṣat says that all the mantras starting from 'imā nukam' and ending with 'indramagnim ca ye viduḥ'... are the utterances of the Pṛśni sages.

Bhāskararāya, the greatest authority on the Śrīvidyā tradition also says in his commentary on the Lalita Sahasranāma that the entire mantras of the Aruṇopaniṣat are the utterances of the Pṛśni sages.

Therefore the Pṛśni sages alone are to be accepted as the original authors of the Aruṇopaniṣat. Still when the Pṛśni sages uttered the mantras of the Aruṇopaniṣat it did not reach the human race. But when Aruṇaketu again revealed the mantras including them in the 27th anuvāka of the First Section of the Taittiriya Āraṇyaka, the Aruṇopaniṣat is preserved for us till today. Therefore the commentator's remark that Aruṇaketu is the Seer (author) of the Aruṇopaniṣat is not completely misleading.

Section 3

The Pṛśni sages, as it has been pointed out in earlier Sections, were ardent devotees of Śrīvidyā and Śrīcakra. They have been deeply Involved in performing

Śrīcakra pūjas and in their deep meditative experiences they have been unterstanding many mysterious spiritual facts. Every time they realize a wonderful truth they used to assemble in one place and used to share and discuss their individual experiences with one another.

Similarly at one time in the remote past the Pṛśni sages in their deep involvement in their Śrīcakra pūja, realized a particular truth and in order to share their individual experiences they as usual assembled in one place. This is what we understand from the remarks of the commentator when he says that 'the Pṛśni sages consult one another'.

This time, perhaps, the experience of the Pṛśni sages was most wonderful and revealing.

In this connection it may be pointed out that the Śrīvidya is a spiritual path leading the worshipper to attain to the unmatching advaitic experience by a graded and systematic meditative rituals. It should also be remarked that the advaita of Śrīvidya is very similar to that of the advaita of the Śankara school even though it is not identical with it.

At the initial stages the Pṛśni sages must have started their worship assuming duality in some form. At an advanced stage the sages must have gone deeper into the knowledge of the Śrīcakra and its actual relationship with the vast universe consisting of many worlds. Their depth of knowledge must have revealed to them the exact relationship existing between the Śrīcakra and the worlds. Immediately they must have agreed to come to a conclusion with regard to the relationship existing between the Śrīcakra and the worlds.

All of them after mutual consultations and discussions agreed to express their peculiar experience in the form of cryptic saying, a mantra. Thus the mantra was revealed in one voice as 'imā nukam bhuvanā sīṣadhema'. In this way Aruṇopaniṣad was born. .. ..

The spiritually well trained commentator after deep meditation on this mantra understands the mantra in two ways. Accordingly the commentator offers two different but related meanings for the first mantra.

The first interpretation is as follows: We the Pṛśni sages, on conjecture, understand that the worlds are established in their proper places because of their worship of the Śrīcakra.

A deep insight into the wordings of this mantra would reveal many mysterious facts..

If the vast Universe consisting of many planets, stars and other inexplicable objects is a wonderful display to a common man the same Universe is a mysterious problem to a philosopher and to a spiritual man also.

Whether the vast Universe which we actually experience in front of us as a reality, is real or unreal this question is always haunting the thinking of a philosopher. If it is unreal how does it appear before us is a question which cannot be answered satisfactorily.

If it is real, who created it, with what it has been created, what is its actual relationship with its own Creator, are some of the most haunting problems to a philosopher and to a spiritual man.

All these problems are included by the Pṛśni sages in one question i.e. how do the worlds which appear to

be hanging in the space without any basis remain established in their places?

On this question the sages went into deep meditation combined with meaningful rituals.

The meditative rituals undertaken by the Pṛśni sages revealed to them a mysterious fact. The sages finally understood that the worlds are established in their proper places because they worshipped the Śrīcakra.

In this connection it is necessary to clear a normal doubt which our readers may have after reading the above mentioned explanation. The doubts which may rise in the minds of our readers are these:— The worlds are inanimate objects and how can they worship the Śrīcakra ? What is the purpose served by the worlds by estabilshing themselves in their proper places ?

According to Śrīvidya no object is inanimate in the true sense of the word. Even the so called inanimate objects can have consciousness to understand their responsibilities and act accordingly.

The worlds after they were created, uuderstood the fact that their duty was to remain in their proper places to undertake a regulated orbital course to discharge their cosmic responsibilities successfully. At the same time the worlds understood that they could not, by their own power, remain established in their proper places. It they cannot establish themselves properly the whole scheme of creation would become chaotic.

When the worlds understood their responsibilities as well as their inability, they were wise enough to appeal to Śrīcakra by the usually recommended ritual way.

Śrīvidya became pleased with the responsible-minded worlds and Śrīvidya blessed them to be established in their proper places for cosmic purposes.

This explanation tells us clearly that the Śrīçakra is so powerful even to be worshipped by the mighty worlds. This also tells us that the relationship existing between the worlds and Śrīcakra as one that is existing between the worshipper and the worshipped. This is one of the two meanings of the first mantra.

Let us now engage our attention to understand the second meaning of the mantra.

The commentator explains the second meaning as follows:— We the Pṛśni sages understand, on enquiry, that the Śrīcakra is identical with the worlds or the worlds are identical with the Śrīcakra.

The meaning 'conjecture' or 'enquiry' is expressed by the most meaningful particle 'nukam' which means both 'conjecture and enquiry' depending upon the proper contexts.

Let us now remember the philosophical and spiritual questions which we raised in the earlier portion of this Section.

We raised the questions whether the worlds are really created and if it is a creation who created them and with what they were created.

In this we have to recall our earlier remark that the Śrīvidya tradition advocates a kind of advaita which accepts creation as real and at the same time creation is never against the identity with the Creator.

It is in order to explain these two aspects of the problem, the commentator gives two alternative meanings to the first mantra.

At a normal level of spirituality Śrīvidya advocates the 'devotee' — 'God' relationship between the worshipper and the Goddess. At a higher level of spirituality the Śrīvidya tradition wants the devotee to experience the identical nature of the worshipper with the Goddess.

In a system of philosophy where logic plays an important role there may be many obstacles to accept these two ideas as mutually complementary. But Śrīvidya aims at the attainment of actual spiritual experience through a systematic ritual which would gradually lead us to a higher advaitic realization in which the worshipper trains himself to identify himself with the Goddess.

Śrīvidya as a spiritual system of thought never tries to get involved unnecessarily with the complicated philosophical questions. As a spiritually based system, Śrīvidya goes beyond Logic and strongly belives in intuitive experience. One who develops intuition by proper methods can directly experience the fact as fact even though from the logical and intellectual point of view there may be some hurldles in realizing the fact as it is.

The spiritual fact cannot be actually understood or realized by mere mental process. In order to understand the intuitive knowledge one has to undertake at the initial stage the Śrīvidya pūja which has been designed in a very systematic manner to lead the spiritual aspirant to the realization of the advaitic truth.

The Śrīvidya pūja ritual has been designed in such a way by many master minds to lead all spiritual aspirants to go into the advaitic sadhana step by step.

When the Śrīvidya upasaka starts his pūja at the initial stage he has to accept the practically felt dualistic ideas. At the same time when the spiritual student advances gradually he would himself slowly begin to realize the advaitic nature of truth.

It is in order to suggest all these, the commentator offers two alternative interpretations to the first mantra of the Aruṇopaniṣat.

In the first interpretation the commentator wants to suggest the dualistic side of the truth by saying that the worlds have established themselves in proper places by worshipping the Śrīcakra.

It is a well-known fact that the idea of worship actually involves dualism between the worshipper and the worshipped. Therefore the idea of dualism is strongly suggested in the first interpretation of the commentator.

Similarly, in the second interpretation. the commentator wants to suggest the advaitic aspect of the truth by saying that the Śrīcakra is identical with these worlds.

A trained philosopher may try to doubt the idea of 'dualism and non-dualism' as accepted and propagated by the Śrīvidya tradition. But as explained in the earlier paragraphs of this Section Śrīvidya in more a spiritual tradition than a philosophical system. And therefore Śrīvidya does not normally try to get involved in dry logical thinking.

This does not mean that Śrīvidya completely ignores logic or philosophy. As far as the Śrīvidya school is concerned it gives some recogntion to philosophical facts and arguments. As Śrī Śankara would very often stress in his writings, logic has a limited scope and logic cannot be over-extended beyond its pronounced limitations.

In the first mantra of this Upaniṣat two facts are emphasised clearly.

1. Śrīcakra is so great and mighty, and therefore even the vast uuiverse consisting of various types of worlds, worship the Śrīcakra in order to get fixed in their proper places for the sake of assisting the scheme of creation of the Cosmic bodies.

2. The fact that Śrīcakra is great does not go against the fact that it is completely identical with all the worlds together with the individual souls.

In order to gain perfection in reality, any spiritual student should learn the art of being a sincere devotee as well as the realizer of identity with the Supreme being. These two experiences are essential for a spiritual person in general and for a follower of Śrīvidya in particular.

Section 4

In Section 3, the greatness and nature of Śrīcakra was mentioned in relation to the Universe. In this Section also the same idea is continued, but in relation to the Vedic Gods.

It is known to every one that during the Vedic period there is a mention of many gods. The nature of these gods has been subjected to a critical study by many Western and Indian scholars and these scholars have come out with various views with regard to these Gods.

All these ideas are very useful to a general student of Indian religion but these ideas are not very useful to a student of Śrīvidya to whom many deeper and secret ideas would be required to understand the nature of these gods. Normally such ideas are not available in such books.

The Aruṇopaniṣat in order to bring out some secret and hidden nature of these gods proclaim the mantra which is under consideration in Section 4.

Usually, in general books on the Vedic gods there would be various types of division of gods. But in the above mantra the Vedic gods are divided into two categories 1. Indra and 2. All other Vedic gods.

Even though Indra also is a Vedic god he is separately mentioned for the main reason that he is the leader of the Vedic gods. As the leader of the Vedic gods, Indra gets a special place in this mantra.

There is one more reason for mentioning him separately. Indra is accepted to be one of the most prominent worshippers of Śrividyā. He is also accepted in the Śrīvidyā tradition as one of the important teachers of Śrividya credited with the discovery of one of the Mūla mantras of the Goddess.

The generally accepted Mūla mantra of the Goddess consists of 15 letters and so it is called in Sanskrit 'Pañcadaśākṣarī'.

In the Śrīvidyā tradition, apart from Indra, many more gods and sages have been recognised as the seers of the Mūlamantra of the Goddess. All these Mūlamantras consist only of 15 letters but neither the individual letters of the mantra are the same in all the mantras nor is the order of the letters the same in all these mantras.

The problems with regard to the letters of the Mūlamantras are somewhat complicated and they would require a separate tratise to deal with them. What is more relevant alone is discussed in this Section.

Indra is thus a great teacher of Śrīvidya tradition who is credited with a Mūlamantra of the Goddess. Therefore Indra is specially mentioned in this mantra.

The words 'viśve ca devaḥ' can be translated in two ways:

According to one, they would mean : The group of gods known as Viśve Devas. It is well-known to the students of the Vedic literature that the words Viśve Devas are occurring in the Vedic literature very frequently. According to Vedic scholars some forty hymns are devoted in the Ṛgveda to the group of gods known as 'All-gods'. But the term 'All-gods' as occurring in the Ṛk and other Vedas would mean a particular group of gods rather than 'All-gods' - meaning all the gods.

But the term 'All-gods' as occurring in the Aruṇopaniṣat seems to mean all the gods and not any particular group of gods.

Therefore the Aruṇopaniṣat mantra would mean 'Indra and all other gods'. By this, all gods including the leader of the gods, are meant here. This would indicate that all the gods are worshippers of the Śrīvidya tradition without any exception.

Thus, in the opinion of Aruṇopaniṣat all the gods are followers of the Śrīvidya path of spirituality. It is in order to bring out this secret information this mantra proclaims this statement.

According to the commentator, this mantra is incomplete and therefore the commentator says that the words 'having worshipped the Śrīcakra, Indra and the Viśve Devas are prosperous'—have to be supplied to complete the meaning of this mantra.

The commentator thinks that he is obliged to bring out two hidden meanings of the mantra.

Accordingly, the commentator tells us that the mantra proclaims to every one that Indra and All-gods are worshippers of the Śrividya path.

In the opinion of the commentator another hidden aspect of the mantra is to tell us that Indra and all other gods are not only mere worshippers of the Śrīvidya tradition, but all these gods are very prosperous because they have undertaken to the worship of Śrīvidya.

It may be remembered that the Rudrayamala passage quoted in Section 1, echoed the same idea. According to the 5th verse of the Rudrayamala quoted in Section 1, it is said that 'Indra and other gods are prosperous because of the grace of this Cakra (Śrīcakra)'.

The commentator seems to believe in the greatness of the Śrīcakra in bringing prosperity to all its devotees and therefore he is fond of repeatidg this remark in some more places in his commentary on Aruṇopaniṣat.

Of all the cakras and yantras revealed to the human race, Śrīcakra is considered to be the 'prince of cakras'. This title is conferred upon Śrīcakra because it is known to be most powerful and most compasionate.

Therefore without its grace, no one can be prosperous either in this world or in the other worlds.

Secton 5

In the previous Section Indra was mentioned in association with the other gods in general. But in this Section Indra is mentioned in association with Ādityas.

Ādityas are a particular group of Vedic gods found mentioned from the time of the Ṛgveda. Scholars who have made a special study of the Vedas have given an elaborate account of the Ādityas in their writings on the History of Vedic Literatuare. Those who would like to know more about the Ādityas may consult standard works on Vedic Literature.

In this Section we would be giving only some facts about the Ādityas which are more relevant to our present study.

According to authorities the Ādityas form a somewhat indefinite group of gods. The actual number constituting the group varies from text to text. The Āditya par excellence is Varuṇa. By about the later Vedic days and in the Epic and the Purāṇas, the number of Ādityas is normally fixed at twelve.

During the later Vedic days Indra distinguished expressly from the group of twelve.

The Ādityas are called so because they are the sons of Aditi. The are bright, golden, unwiking, sinless. pure and holy. The most imortant fact to be noted in them is that they hate falsehood and punish sin; they fetter their enemies, but protect with armour their votaries, and forgive their wickedness; sickness and distress. They repel, and grant the usual boons of long life and offspring.

Another group of gods found mentioned in the Vedic literature is the Maruts. They are essentially a troupe whose number varies from 27 to 180. They are usually considered to be the children of Rudra. Therefore they are also called Rudras or Rudriyas. Their parentage is not very clear but their mother is Pṛśni.

The name Pṛśni is very familiar to us as the group of sages who revealed the mantras of Aruṇopaniṣat. But this name Pṛśni denotes a female cow. The exact relationship of the Pṛśni (the cow) with the Pṛśnis (the sages) may have to be studied in detail in a later work.

Their brightness is one of their leading features. They are also intimately connected with the lightning and they are also said to be carrying the lightning in their hands.

The Maruts are great, young, unaging, terrible like wild beasts. They roar like lions. They bring rain with them. Their home is in the three heavens as well as in the three worlds.

The main deed of the Maruts is the rendering of aid to Indra in the slaying of Vṛtra. Sometimes they are also called sons or brothers of Indra.

Some details about the Ādityaṣ and the Maruts were given above in order to point out the fact that in the Vedic or later literature the Ādityas were never identified with the Maruts.

But the commentator of the Aruṇopaniṣat while commenting on the mantra mentioned above in Section 5 identifies the Ādityas with the Maruts. While explaining the word 'ādityaiḥ saha Indraḥ' the commentator offers the meaning 'Maruts' to the word 'ādityaiḥ' found in the original mantra.

While the modern authorities on Vedic literature may not favour this interpretation, the commentator for reasons known only to him identifies 'ādityaṣ' with the 'Maruts'. Perhaps the spiritual vision of the commentator encouraged him to interpret it this way.

The mantra is a prayer addressed to Indra who is in the company of the Maruts. The mantra seeks the blessings of Indra to protect the sacrifices, the wife of the sacrificer, the children of the sacrificer and all other wealth and properties of the sacrificer.

We have already mentioned that Indra, Ādityas and the Maruts are naturally inclined to offer protection to their votaries. Therefore the mantra addresses them to offer protaction to the worshippers of Śrīvidya.

The mantra also tells us a very interesting fact. In Section 1, we have already taken notice of the fact in the fifth verse of the Rudrayamala that Indra and other gods including the eight Vasus and the Maruts are very prosperous because of the grace of the Śrīcakra. The Rudrayamala statement is corroborated strongly by the Aruṇopaniṣat which is the earliest and the most important authority on Śrīvidya tradition.

Indra is leading a prosperous life and the Maruts also are very prosperous. These gods are prosperous because they have undertaken the worship of Śrīcakra and the Śrīcakra has made them prosperous.

The word 'aiśvarya' is used in the mantra to denote the meaning 'prosperity'. In the popular usage the word 'aiśvarya' means prosperity in general. But technically the word 'aiśvarya' denotes the six categories such as aiśvarya, dharma, yaśas, śrī, Jñāna and vairagya. These respectively would mean: wealth (in general), attachment to the righteous path, fame, prosperity, knowledge and detachment.

The word aiśvarya would also denote in a special way 'mastery'.

Therefore Indra and Maruts are in possession of all these aiśvaryas by worshipping Śrīcakra.

Having explained these points, the commentator now proceeds to explain some more significant points while offering interpretation on the word 'sīṣadhątu'.

As explained in Part 2 (in the English translation) the word 'sīṣadhątu' would mean two alternative meanings. The first alternative has been explained in the preceding paragraphs.

The second alternative would be explained now.

In this connection it is necessary to explain some important facts about the spiritual traditions in general and Śrīvidyą tradition in particular.

In almost all the spiritual traditions, especially of India, it would be explained that God or some great spiritual personality was the founder or revealer of the tradition. Similarly, in Śrīvidyą it is said that all the Tantras were revealed by Lord Śiva.

While revealing the tenets of the tradition it would very often be cautioned that the tradition is very secret and it should not be revealed to those who are not fully qualified to receive it.

Usually, the caution has been misunderstood widely. In any tradition there would be certain elements which would require to be kept secret. The word secret does not mean that it is a secret for every one for all times. It is secret only to those who are not yet qualified for it. Qualification is not restricted in any way. Every one who has a desire to know it generates in himself slowly the required qualification. While it is the duty of the aspirants to develop such qualifications, it is also the duty of the teachers of the tradition to see that some are qualified to receive the tradition so that the tradition never goes out of vouge.

In fact it is the duty of the teachers to find out somehow such qualified persons so that it could be taught to them gradually.

If a teacher before he dies, fails to instruct the tradition at least to one student, the teacher may be said to commit a great sin.

In fact the teacher learns the tradition only to propagate it and not to allow it to die with him.

It is to emphasise on this significant point, the commentator proposes the second alternative interpretation to the word 'śīṣadhatu'. Therefore the commentator tells us that Indra has become prosperous by teaching us the cakravidya.

Indra is very prosperous only because of the fact that he has continued the tradition by teaching it to some.

Śrīvidya would be more pleased only if the worshippers of the Śrīvidya engage themselves in propagating the tradition to as many qualified students as possible.

Indra has set the good precedent in being an iedal teacher and let all other teachers of Śrīvidya tradition follow him sincerely and efficiently.

Before concluding his commentary on the mantra under Section 5, the commentator makes a grammatical observation on the word 'sīṣadhatu'.

The word sīṣadhatu is an imperative form but while commenting on it the commentator gives a meaning in the past tense. In order to justify his change of form, the commentator partially quotes a Pāṇinīan sūtra.

If the commentator had quoted the first word of the sūtra it would be easy to consult the index of sūtras and to find out the exact sūtra wherein the partial quotation occurs.

The commentator, as it was normal in those days, was a master of Sanskrit grammar and he was able to quote any part of the sūtra from memory. But the modern scholarship is not so equipped to remember all the sūtras at once by mere memory power. It is really a problem to identify the actual sūtra without the help of a traditional scholar in Sanskrit Grammar.

Paṇinī has a sūtra which is as follows:—

प्रैषातिसर्गप्राप्तकालेषु कृत्याश्च ।

This is numbered as the 2817th Sūtra in the order of Aṣṭadhayī and the Sūtra occurs in 3.3.163.

The Sūtra means: The affixes called 'kṛtya', and the affix 'Lot' come also after verbs, in the sense of direction, granting permission, and proper (particular) time.

In this sūtra 'praptakala' means 'arrival of appropriate occasion or time for the doing of an action'. The force of 'च' (in the Sūtra) is to introduce the word लोट् into this aphorism.

On the authortiy of this Sūtra we may from a sentence with a कृत्य affix or instead of the कृत्य affix (i.e., कर्तव्य: etc.,) we may have the imperative form also. Thus करोतु कटं would mean 'you (must, may, or it is the appropriate time to) make the mat'.

As we have already noticed in the Aruṇopaniṣat mantra the imperative 'sīṣadhatu' has been used and it

therefore means: O, Indra, the proper or appropriate time has come so that you may teach Śrīvidya to us.

The Pṛśni sages by using the Imperative form of the verb (sīṣadhatu) actually does not command Indra to teach Śrīvidya to them. Instead, they appeal to Indra by remainding him that the proper time has come for him to teach Śrīvidya to them.

It is really wonderful to note that the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣad by using two words 'praptakale lot' expresses such an elaborate idea. In order to understand these two words, we may have to be familiar with the entire grammatical tradiiion as mentioned above.

Section 6

This mantra also is addressed to Indra in the form of a prayer. As explained in the previous Section, Indra is iuvoked not as an individual but as the leader of the group.

In this mantra there is mention of Adityas as well as the Maruts. As we have noticed in the previous Section, Ādityas are separate groups of gods and similarly the Maruts also are separate groups. As it was pointed out, in the Vedic literature there is no explicit connection between these two groups.

Still the commentator does not try to take notice of these peculiarities with regard to these two groups. The commentator seems to assume that Ādityas and the Maruts are identical.

In fact the first line creates complications with regard to the syntactical connection. The word Ādityaiḥ

is in plural and in the instrumental case. Likewise the word Marudbhiḥ also is in instrumental case and in plural.

Therefore according to Sanskrit grammar both the words may be taken to go together synactically. There is no difficulty in connecting these two words grammatically.

Still the grammatical agreement does not help us to solve the semantical problem. While the Vedic literature has not identified these two groups how can these two groups be connected?

The Vedic interpreters like Bhaṭṭa Bhaskara and Sayaṇa seem to think that Indra is accompanied by both Ādityas and Maruts. These two Vedic scholars do not seem to identify Ādityas with the Maruts as the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣad does. These two Vedic scholars explain these two groups as the attendants of Indra. According to them Indra is called 'Sagaṇaḥ' because he is accompanied both by Ādityas and the Maruts.

The commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat seems to have his own reason to identify Ādityas with the Maruts and as he is not explaining the reason it is difficult to argue for or against his views on this issue.

It may be remembered that the previous mantra addressed to Indra requested him to protect the Agniṣṭoma and other sacrifices, our body, our wife, our progeny and all other forms of wealth.

The Section 6, addresses Indra to protect our sons, friends and our wives.

Now it has to be probed into, why the Aruṇopaniṣad should repeat the prayer twice. As we know, the Vedas are so higly spiritual that they would not repeat the ideas unless there is any very valid reason.

The commentator does not seem to be ready with any answer to this question. But he seems to suggest an answer when he wants to give us the intended meaning apart from the explicit meaning.

A careful study of the prayer mentioned in Section 5 and in this Section 6, would reveal that there is subtle difference in the prayers of the previous mantra and in this mantra.

The previous mantra prays to Indra to protect the sacrifices etc. But the intention of this mantra is to invoke the blessings of Indra accompanied by Ādityas and the Maruts, to have, not a mere protection from Indra.

In this mantra the requirement is Yogakṣema. The word Yogakṣema is well-known to us as it occurs in the most famous Bhagavad Gīta. The word 'yogakṣema' is translated differently by different translators of the Gīta.

In our translation of the word in Part 2, we have adopted one of the famous translations 'attainment of what we do not have and security in what we have'.

Śrī Śankara in his commentary under the Gīta verse 9,22 explains the word yogakṣema as follows:—

'I secure gain; I secure to them what is not already possessed; and I secure to them safety, i.e., preservation of what is already possessed'.

Śrī Ramanuja in his Gīta commentary says:—

'I look after and carry on (their) prosperity in the form of attainment of myself and welfare'.

In the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition 'yoga' means prosperity which is the gain of such good things as have not been

acquired previously. 'Kṣema' means welfare which is the safeguarding of the good that has been gained.

In the Madhva tradition the following explanation is offered:—

'Yoga:—is the obtaining of what is not already possessed; here, (it means) the attainment of Mokṣa. kṣema:— is the security of what is obtained; here (it means) the eternal character which the Lord confers on their heavenly life. That is to say, He confers on the devout that heavenly abode from which they do not return to mortal life.

Śrī S. Radhakrishnan explains the term as follows:— 'Yogakṣema is acquisition of the new and preservation of the old'.

Thus the old and the new scholars of the Gīta are almost uniform in giving the same meaning to the word.

From all these above quoted statements we may guess that the prayer is not repeated in Section 6. There is a lot of difference between the nature of prayer as expressed in Section 5 and in Section 6.

In the previous Section Indra was asked to be the mere protector of many things connected with us. But in this Section Indra is asked to bestow yogakṣema which has a deeper meaning than mere protection.

Section 7

While any religion or philosophy has a theoretical side as one aspect, it would normally have another essential side in which practical hints and guidelines would be available for practising the religion.

Without the corresponding practical side, no religion or philosophy can strike root among its followers. If the practical side is either weak or impracticable, it is sure that the concerned religion or philosophy would disappear gradually.

Sometimes we would even see that in some religions and philosophies there would be more stress on the practical side than on the theoretical side.

As it was pointed out in the earlier Sections, Śrī-vidyā has more stress on its practical side rather than on its theoretical side. As pointed out earlier ,this remark should not be mistaken that the theoretical side of Śrīvidyā is completely nil.

Among the vast volumes written, on Śrīvidyā, there are many texts which try to theorize matters. Still, Śrī-vidyā has more stress on the practical side.

Usually in religions, the practical side would be taken care of by a section known as the Paddhati texts. Sometimes these texts are called yoga section or kriyā section.

It may be pointed out that while the first three Adhyāyas of the Brahma Sūtra deal with the theories, the fourth Adhyāya gives more stress on the practical side.

We may now consider the remarks of Śrī Śankara in his introduction to the fourth chapter of Brahma Sūtra.

'The third chapter was mostly occupied with a discussion of the practices connected with the conceptions (vidyās) of the qualified Brahman and absolute Brahman. Now this fourth chapter will be concerned with the discussion about the results, and it will also consider some other matters stemming out of that subject.

'......The doubt arises with regard to these, whether the mental act is to be undertaken once only, or it is to be repeated. What should be the conclusions?

'The mental act is to be repeated.

'Why?

'Since the instruction (of the Upaniṣads) is repeated. Such repeated instruction ...... indicates a repetition of the mental act.

'...... Since these have to culminate in the intuitive realization of Brahman; for hearing etc., fulfil their purpose of producing a (tangible) perceptible result and in this case when they culminate in realization through repetition. Besides, by the word 'upāsanā' (continuous remembrance, adoration) and 'nididhyāsana' (profound meditation) are implied acts involving this aspect of repetition.

...

'Hence repetition has to be resorted to even where the instruction occurs only once, while a repeated instruction indicates repetition as a matter of course'.

Srī Rāmānuja also in his Brahma Sūtra commentary writes in the same way as Śankara writes.

All these go to prove that in any branch of religion stress is made on the practical aspect of the religion which alone plays an important role in keeping the religion alive and active always.

The underlying principle in all the above mentioned statements is that any religion or philosophy is primarily meant for practising it. In order to practise a religion or philosophy one has to necessarily undergo training in the methods dealing with the right kind of practice with particular reference to that religion or philosophy. Therefore as mentioned earlier each religion or philosophy has developed its own texts to serve as guides to the practice.

Although every religion has its own respective practical manuals, the practical manuals with reference to Śrīvidya are worth-noticing than the other manuals.

In fact the history of the practical manuals of the Śrīvidya tradition is not only long but also somewhat complicated. Such a long history need not be mentioned in this book. But a brief history may be very useful to understand the other facts mentioned in this book.

Even though the traditional scholars of Śrīvidya believe that the Śrīvidya tradition is as old as the Vedas, the modern scholars are able to trace the history of the Śrīvidya tradition explicitly only from the 8th or 9th century A. D. From that time onwards many practical manuals are available in this tradition.

Even in the modern days many Maṇḍalis have brought out their own manuals for their private use. Thus we may say that at least 200 to 300 manuals are available in the Śrīvidya tradition.

While there are many common sections and details in all these manuals, there are many deviations found in each of the manuals. Of the common sections, the section which prescribes the Bhūtasuddhi is very relevant to us in this connection.

Bhūtasubdhi usually occurs as the first Section of the Second Khaṇḍa of the Manual. It normally consists of six rituals. The whole Bhūtasuddhi section deals with the breath - control as accepted by the Srīvidya tradition.

This ritual is to purify the physical body of the worshipper so that he can perform the Srīvidya pūja as a fit man.

The worshipper sitting in a convenient but prescribed way breaths the air in and out alternatively by the right and the left nostrils with some strong mental and psychological assumptions.

In this process the worshipper mentally burns his entire body and reduces it to mere ashes. After converting it into ashes he invokes the Goddess (or Paramaśiva) to pour profusely the ambrosial liquid from the worshipper's mind centre called Sahasrāra centre.

It is this ambrosial flow that is going to wet the whole heap of ashes and create a divine body for the worshipper to make use of it at least till the end of the Śrīvidyā pūjā. The underlying belief is that unless the worshipper performs the pūjā with such a divine body, the worship will not be really fruitful.

The Upaniṣadic mantra which is read in this Section 7, makes a prayer to the Goddess to drench his 72000 nāḍis by the profuse ambrosial liquid that starts flowing from the mind-centre.

In this connection it may be pointed out that according to spiritual authorities every human being has some subtle kind of nerves called 'nāḍis' which have been accepted to be 72000 in number. The ambrosial flow should be flown in such a way that the fluid wets the 72000 'nāḍis' profusely and completely.

By this flow of ambrosia the worshipper is going to convert his own body into a golden or divine body. This divine body alone is the right body to perform the Śrīcakra worship. A normal human body cannot be helpful in this regard.

In order to create this kind of divine body a mere will of the worshipper will not be sufficient. The strong and sincere will of the worshipper will prepare the psychological background and on this alone the Goddess will mercifully condescend to release the ambrosial flow. This ambrosial flow will start from the Sahasrara centre and it should be distributed in such a way that it flows throughout the 72000 nadis. Everytime the worshipper does this Bhūtasuddhi ritual he should imagine very strongly that he is drenched by this flow so profusely and completely.

In this connection it is necessary to point out that in none of the Śrīvidya manuals, whether they are ancient or modern, there is any mention of this Upaniṣadic mantra 'aplavasva praplavasva' in the Bhūtasuddhi section.

What is very strange is that the mantra is not quoted even in the Paraśurama Kalpa Sūtra which is considered to be the most prominent authority on Śrīvidya rituals. In some other contexts Paraśurama quotes one or two Vedic mantras and it would have been more appropriate if Paraśurama had quoted this mantra in the Bhūtasuddhi context.

The usual formula suggested in Paraśurama and other manuals is as follows:—

४ वं १६ (इडया पूरयित्वा) परमशिवामृतं वर्षय वर्षय स्वाहा इति तद्भस्म सहस्रारेन्दुमण्डलविगलदमृतरसेनसिक्तं च विभाव्य, (पिङ्गलया रेचयेत्) ॥

The above mantric formula may be explained as follows:—

The symbol ४ represents the four Bīja letters ॐ ऐं ह्रीं श्रीं ।

वं — is the mantra to be repeated 16 times.

The invocation is addressed to the Supreme God or Goddess to flow the most divine ambrosia.

Having uttered the above formula, the worshipper should imagine as if the ambrosial flow that oozes out from the Sahasrara Centre drenches completely the ashes.

While repeating the letter 'वं' the worshipper should slowly inhale through the iḍa nostril the air till the repetition is slowly made for 16 times. After the above imagination the worshipper should slowly exhale the air. While exhaling, the pingala nostril should be used.

In this connection another important point should be mentioned.

Srīvidya worship from a long past is undertaken by many people in different ways. All these differences cannot be pointed out in this book in a detailed way. Still only a few important differences may be pointed out for the sake of introducing the differences in the Śrīvidya tradition.

As pointed out in the preceding Sections, there are many worship—manuals in this tradition for the sake of guiding the devotees practically.

There are some manuals in which Śrīvidya rituals are prescribed in a very elaborate manner which would take at least five to eight hours to complete them in the daily routine. In this context the name of a Manual called 'Soubhagya Ratnakara' written by a great worshipper Śrīvidyananda Natha may be mentioned. The manual would occupy nearly 900 pages in a fullscap paper. This manual is meant for those who can afford to spend at least more than five hours a day on doing the rituals.

Those who cannot spend such a long time may choose other manuals which are designed for 15 minutes to five hours.

From these facts we may understand that there are so many different types of manuals to suit different types of devotees. All these manuals believe that Śrīvidya worship should be done in the prescriled manner with necessary utensils and pūja objects as an external act.

Those worshippers of Śrīvidya who believe in the actual external rituals may choose any of these manuals.

At the same time there is another set of worshippers in Śrīvidya who believes that the Srīvidya worship need not be performed actually but it should be done completely as a mental worship. In this tradition no recognition is given to external form of worship.

This tradition is called Samayacara. Even though the term is used even in early texts like Kularṇava Tantra, it seems that Lakṣmīdhara who in normally assigned to the 15th century and who has written a commentary on the Saundarya Laharī, was the most prominent advocate of this tradition.

As discussed in the introduction to this book it is doubtful whether Lakṣmīdhara can be identified with the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat.

Still it is not possible to deny that the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat also is a strong believer in Samayacara. In the small commentary on the Aruṇopaniṣat he often advocates strongly the tradition of Samayacara.

As a storng believer of Samayacara the commentator of Aruṇopanisat cannot be expected to openly encourage the external worship.

Therefore the commentator under the present mantra does not make any reference to the external worship.

That is why the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat does not connect the mantra with Bhūtasuddhi rituals of the Śrīvidya tradition.

As far as the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat is concerned, the present mantra is a prayer addressed to the Goddess to shower an incessant flow of ambrosia. The Bhūtasuddhi ritual also is designed to make the same flow. Therefore these two forms of rituals have close relationship in form and content. Therefore in this book the two types of rituals were identified.

Section 8

Time and again it has been emphasized in the earlier Sections that Śrīvidya is an advaitic system primarily and fully. The advaitic nature of Śrīvidya has been explained by the commentator whenever an opportunity was given to him.

This is a mantra in which the commentator finds an opportunity to explain the advaitic nature of Śrīvidya.

It may be remembered that the Rudrayamala brought out the identity of the worlds with the Śrīcakra. The same idea was echoed in the first mantra of this Upaniṣat also.

Although the truth is advaitic in nature it has to be repeatedly emphasized for the simple reason that in practice we find only facts showing its non-advaitic colour. In this vast universe everything is dualistic in nature. The dualistic nature is so powerful and emphatic a normal mind in ordinary circumstances cannot accept the advaitic nature.

Just because there is duality presented before us we cannot take that fact to be a reality. As a spiritual system Śrīvidya firmly believes that unless the worshipper understands the truth of advaita, there is no salvation for the worshipper.

The aim of the commentator is to explain the advaitic truth contained in this mantra.

As the normal weak mind is unable to understand the advaitic truth, the commentator explains the phrase 'aṇḍī bhava' as meaning 'grant us oneness with you, O, Mother'.

This is a significant explanation.

Those worshippers who have advanced experience and knowledge, may understand intuitively the advaitic truth. But those worshippers who have no ability to understand this truth have no other alternative excepting appealing to the Goddess to grant them the knowledge and experience of advaita.

On behalf of these types of devotees the Upaniṣat makes an appeal to the Goddess for the grant of advaitic truth. If the devotee repeatedly utters this mantra for a long time with a sincere heart the Goddess who is very compationate would condescend to grant us this truth. Let the spiritual aspirants repeat this prayer to fulfil this aim.

What has been stated above is one form of prayer towards the Supreme Goddess.

The same mantra points out that there is another prayer imbeded in this mantra.

This prayer also is contained in the same phrase 'aṇḍī bhava'. In this, the term 'bhava' means 'lead me in such a way that our individual bodies become identical with your Universal body.'

In this connection a word of explanation may be offered to explain the above mentioned interpretation.

When the Goddess created the Universe it was created as containing two aspects. The bigger bodies like the planets, stars etc., formed one group. The individual bodies found in all human beings, big animals like the elephants and the small insects like the ants and worms form the second group. For all practical purposes, one is a very big variety and the other is a very small variety. The big is sometimes very big beyond our sight and imagination and the small is very small beyond our sight and imagination. This difference in size and form between the big things and the small things makes us feel deeply that the big can never be identical with the small and likewise the small can never be identified with the big things. The difference in size has thus deceived us and lead us believe that both are different.

But what is the real truth?

The small thing contains all the elements of a big thing and the big thing contains all the elements of a small thing.

One of the famous commentaries on the Saundarya Laharī is Diṇḍima Bhāsya. This commentary while explaining the 10th verse of Saundarya Laharī explains in detail how the big Universe is identical with the small bodies. In this connection the commentary quotes a verse from a text called Yogadīpikā, which says: what is found in all the universe in the space, all these are established in the individual bodies. The smallness and the bigness found in between them can never differentiate the Universe and the individual body.

Having quoted this affirmation, Ḍiṇḍima explains how the small individual body contains what all found in the expanded Universe.

In the Universe	In the individual body
The biggest Lokaloka mountains	The skin
The oceans	The blood
Ganges and other rivers	Iḍa and Pingala nerves
The Sun and other planets	The eleven sense-organs
The Brahman	The mind
The Mahameru mountain	The heart-lotus
The mountains (in general)	The bones
The Universal soul	The individual soul
The thousands of Yugas	The darkness
The sleep of Brahman after the laya of the universe	The sleep of the individual after the day time
The shining of the Sun and other luminaries	The waking up of the sense organs
The burning of the universal bodies at the end of the Yugas, by Lord Mahadeva in Kaśī.	The burning of the dead after the departure of life from the body.

According to the commentary of Ḍiṇḍima these are some of the similarities between the universal body and the individual body.

One can now be convinced after the explanation of Ḍiṇḍima, that the size is no difference between the Universe and the body.

The worshipper, therefore, should try to identify the various components of the body with those of the Universe as stated above. Such a meditation would soon take the worshipper to the goal of human life by making us understand the truth.

Still it is necessary to remember that the worshipper should not try to understand any spiritual truth by mere intellectual analysis.

The devotee should sincerely appeal to the Goddess that she should lead him to this type of identity. By this deep prayers the Goddess becomes very much convinced of the sincerity of the worshipper and she will immediately grant the real knowledge about the identity.

It is not enough to understand this identity superficially. He must prove his worthiness in getting the knowledge of identity practically and actually.

The realization of identity becomes more effective only when the devotee qualifies himself to become fit for receiving the boundless mercy of the Supreme Goddess.

The commentator wants to emphasise one more point in this connection.

He in this context wants to stress on the mantra 'muhur ma avagaccha'. This, as we have seen already, means: Bless us repeatedly in such a way that we understand that we are identified with you.

The commentator wants to tell us that the identity between us and the Supreme Goddess is not a fact which is going to be newly created as a result of our meditation on identity.

The identity between us and the Goddess exists whether we understand it or not. The meditation on the identity would only generate the spiritual awareness in us to understand and realize the ever existing truth which depends on no proof or effort.

In a way this is a kind of 'rediscovery' rather than creating a new fact or relationship. To use the Kashmir Śaiva phrase it is Pratyabhijña. This type of knowledge is necessary for a worshipper.

In this mantra the commentator makes two observations from the grammatical point of view.

He explains the word 'aṇḍi' as a Taddhita affix. He further explains that the affix signifies 'the taking place of something which was not there before'.

This may be explained as follows: When a cloth becomes dirty, we use some washing soap and clean the cloth. After the application of the soap water we see that the cloth regains its whiteness. This whiteness is not a new substance which we create in the cloth. We have only tried to remove the dirt and the disappearance of the dirt makes the cloth shine with its original whiteness.

'What was not there before' does not actually mean that a new thing is created. It only means that what was hiding is made to reappear.

In the same way we are ever identical with the Goddess, but temporarily we have failed to realize the fact, and now the meditative process takes us very near the truth.

In the mantra the word 'ज' occurs and the commentator explains that the original word is 'अज' but it occurs in the mantra as a single lettered word. According to the commentator the letter 'अ' has been dropped following the practice that was prevalent during the Vedic age.

The commentator also explains that the root 'अज' means 'to understand' and therefore it has been translated in the English version of our part 2 as 'bless us repeatedly in such a way that we understand that we are identical with you'.

The word 'मा' should not be taken to mean any prohibitive sense. The word is actually the Accussative singular of the noun 'अहम्'. It is well-known to all of us that the accussative forms of अहम् have two alternative forms each.

In this context there may arise a doubt to our readers about an interpretation on a part of this mantra.

The commentator interprets the words 'muhur ma avagaccha' as meaning 'bless us repeatedly'. Why should the Goddess bless us repeatedly? Will it not be enough if she blesses us only once?

It is true that it is enough if she blesses us once. But as most of the worshippers are not steady in their spirituality, it is absolutely necessary that she should be kind enough to bless us repeatedly to uplift us to the required height and depth.

Section 9

In the previous Sections we have been cosidering many aspects of Śrīvidya. All these aspects were slowly leading us towards a central theme of Śrīvidya known as the Goddess Supreme.

So far in the early mantras of this Upaniṣat no direct mention about the Goddess was made. But in this mantra a direct mention is made about her. Before we take up to analyse the actual content of this mantra, it is necessary to give an introduction which would be useful to understand this mantra.

Śrīvidya is a worship centering round the Goddess known by different names. Lalita, Tripura Sundarī Para Bhaṭṭarika are some of the most important names attributed to her in this tradition.

Slowly in the later Śrīvidya texts many more names were added. All these names culminated in the most popular text known as Lalita Sahasranama.

The actual text of Lalita Sahasranama poses many problems to a critical scholar of Śrīvidya. First, the date of the text cannot be determined with any degree of certainty.

Lalita Sahasranama, containing 320 verses in three chapters, occurs according to the traditional scholars, in the second part of the Brahmaṇḍa Puraṇa which is believed to be the last of 18 Puraṇas. Unfortunately this portion is not found in the modern editions of this Puraṇa.

Lalita Sahasranama has been commented upon by some great scholars and the chief among them is the great Bhaskararaya.

In the modern times, in popular tradition and belief, Śrīvidya means three texts namely Lalita Sahasranama, Saundarya Laharī and Lalita Triśatī.

In all these three and other texts, plenty of discriptions is available on the actual personality and the nature of the Goddess. These texts are very useful to the ordinary and the middle types of Śrīvidya worshippers.

Any worshipper, to begin with, needs a detailed description of the Goddess mainly to visualize the actual figure of the Goddess which would be very helpful for the devotee to perform Śrīvidya worship. Before the devotee goes to the higher level of worship, he needs to mentally visualize the actual figure of the Goddess.

It is with this view in mind the Aruṇopaniṣat now proclaims this mantra 'Sukhadīm duḥkha nidhanam'. This mantra, perhaps gave an impetus to the later Śrīvidya teachers to come out with more and more descriptions of the Goddess.

This mantra does not give any descriptions about the physical features of the Goddess. This mantra tries to sum up the most important aspects of the Goddess.

The Commentator gives three alternative meanings to this mantra. In order to give these three alternative meanings, the commentator has to split the mantra in three different ways.

The first interpretation is based on the mantra split as follows:-

सुखादि इन्दुः खनिधनाम् ।

The second interpretation is based on the following way of splitting;-

सुखादीं दुःखनिधनाम् ।

The third interpretation also has the same splitting as found in the second alternative, but as the meaning is slightly different in the third splitting it has to be taken as the third alternative.

In the Śrīvidya tradition the final aim of the devotee is to enjoy the divine and supreme ananda.

The ananda is first imagined by the worshipper in the Bhūtasuddhi ritual. Slowly the devotee feels that the ambrosial flow actually flows into him. Finally due to the intensive nature of the worship the devotee experiences the ananda when he identifies himself with the Devī in the Bindu cakra which is called the Sarvanandamaya cakra. All these prove that the attainment of ananda in the true sense of the word is the final goal of Śrīvidya.

The actual method by which the ananda is generated in the worshipper will be discussed in detail when we deal with some other later mantras of this upaniṣat.

The ananda is contained always in the Bindu cakra. This bindu is called 'indu'. In the actual universe which is externally seen by us there is a planet called 'the Moon' and this planet is supposed to be the abode of ambrosia.

Similarly there is a moon inside the body of all human beings which is located in the head-centre. This centre is called Sahasrara which is supposed to contain a thousand-petalled lotus.

The devotee is asked to generate the ambrosia in the moon-centre. As it has been mentioned several times, without the grace of the Goddess, no one is able to attempt or achieve any progress in spirituality.

Therefore in the first interpretation of this mantra the commentator explains the word 'sukhadi' as meaning 'the enjoyer, the grantor or the accomplisher of Ānanda.'

The three alternative words given here are to be noted carefully. The Goddess is allotted three roles in this connection in the first interpretation.

1. The accomplisher:- This word is purposely used by the commentator to show that the worshipper is not the accomplisher. When the devotee sincerely engages himself in the worship of the Goddess, being pleased with the sincerity of the devotee the Goddess comes forward to accomplish the desire of the devotee. Therefore she is the real accomplisher.

In her second role the Goddess becomes the grantor of the desires of the worshipper. In this role she grants the sincere prayers of the devotee.

As mentioned earlier, the advaitic bhavana is achieved by the devotee at the higher level of spirituality. At this stage the ananda is enjoyed not by the devotee but by the Goddess herself. Therefore, she is the real enjoyer of ananda.

In the Śrīvidya texts the Goddess is supposed to live in a particular place located in a particular spot in the external universe.

But the Goddess lives actually in the Bindu centre which she likes and loves most. As it is a very favourite abode of the Goddess, she thinks that it is her best property. That is why she is called 'khanidhanam' which means: one who considers 'kham' (i.e. the abode of Bindu) as the most precious wealth (superior to all other forms of wealth).

Let us now consider the second interpretation of this mantra.

According to this second interpretation the Goddess has two significant aspects. It may be remembered that the fundamental nature of the soul is ananda, still the soul is not able to enjoy its own ananda because of the impediments created by the bad elements.

The Goddess in her most merciful nature tries to help the suffering souls because her nature is ananda par excellence. She is the one who excels in ananda. By her excellent ananda she helps every devotee to enjoy ananda.

The second nature of the Goddess is brought out in her being the 'duḥkhanidhanam'.

In all the religions the common aim is to get relieved of the suffering which is the cause of all problems to each and every individual.

The Śrīvidya pūja is designed in such a way that it provides excellent remedy to suffering. It is for this

most important goal that the Bhūtasuddhi ritual has been introduced in the Śrīvidyā ritual.

As explained earlier, the Bhūtasuddhi ritual is aiming at destroying the suffering by a regulated slow process. The ritual is designed to act on the psychological plane of the human beings.

Those who regularly undertake to do the Bhūtasuddhi ritual prepare themselves to establish strong contacts with the Sahasrāra centre in which the Bindu is located. By establishing this type of contact the worshipper comes to a level in which no trace of suffering is available. This is one of the best advantages of a Śrīvidyā worshipper.

The third interpretation would be considered now.

In this interpretation the words of the mantra are split as shown in the English translation of this book. According to this interpretation she is the one who understands even the deepest mind. This is the peculiarity of the Goddess.

At the same time, the commentator wants to tell us that we must take all precautions to see that our sense organs are not allowed to be influenced by any bad elements. Our Goddess is described to be beyond the reach of the bad senses. This means that we should be careful in protecting our sense–organs falling a prey to the bad elements.

The Śrīvidyā tradition has thus designed the rituals to bring the desired effect in us.

Section 10

The commentator of the Aruṇopaniṣat used to be very helpful in giving us one or two clues to expand the idea given by him under each of the Upaniṣadic mantras. But in this mantra he has not given us any clue. The mantra has been translated by us in Part 2, as 'take refuge in the body of the Goddess'. Still it is our duty to explain the mantra further in order to make the meaning more clear.

The Sanskrit word which occurs in the mantra to denote the same concept is 'पुरम्'. This word पुरम् is translated by us as 'the body' based on the explanation of the commentator who uses the word 'देहम्'. The simple translation of the word is 'body' and so this translation has been adopted by us.

What is the intention of the commentator which he would like to convey in his commentary under the mantra?

In a later mantra i.e., in mantra 19, the commentator gives a different meaning for the word 'पूः' which is a synonym of the word पुरम्. When we consider that mantra we may explain the term. In this context it is our duty to explain the term पुरम्.

The commentator in this mantra strongly suggests that we, the devotees, shall take refuge in the 'body' of the Goddess.

It may be pointed out here that the Śrīvidyā tradition, in general, believes in the personal nature of the Goddess. As explained earlier, the Śrīvidyā texts very often try to give a picturesque description of the Goddess.

In such descriptions meticulous care would have been taken to present a vivid picture of the Goddess.

Such verses are called 'dhyāna ślokas' which are very useful to the devotees to visualize mentally the various features of the physical body of the Goddess. Having read these verses several times, the devotees are expected to form a clear mental picture of the Goddess so that the picture of the Goddess could be remembered during the time of pūjā or whenever the devotee wants to meditate on the Goddess.

In all these descriptions the Goddess is attributed with a physical body. But the physical body of the Goddess is different from the physical body which all of us are possessing.

Our bodies are the necessary products of our own 'Karma.' Our bodies are subject to growth, decay and destruction. In a way our bodies are a burden to us to some extent.

But the body of the Goddess is divine in all aspects. She has no body as a Supreme Goddess but out of her extreme mercy she holds a body in order to shower her compassion on us.

Her body is pure and permanent. Her body has no change or destruction.

She very well knows that in order to help the ordinary devotees she has to bear a body. Her supreme 'nirguṇa' form cannot be understood by her ordinary devotees.

Unless the Śrīvidyā devotee advances in his spirituality he cannot make use of the 'nirguṇa' form. Therefore she

has assumed a physical body and as long as we are in a lower or middle level of spirituality we should try to take refuge in her physical body which is the only approach to us.

The Commentator therefore strongly suggests that we should surrender in her physical body so that we can take advantage of the merciful nature of the Goddess.

Section 11

This mantra also, in a way, describes about the Goddess. In a later mantra (Section 19) the commentator is going to explain that the gods are called 'devas' because they are of shining nature. The commentator wants to say through this explanation that all the gods are in possession of shining character.

If all the ordinary gods are having shining nature, there can be no doubt about the chief of the gods i.e. the Goddess. She being the Supreme Goddess, possesses shining nature which is of a special degree. This mantra has been proclaimed by the sages mainly to focus our attention on this aspect of the Goddess.

In this vast universe there are many objects which have a shining nature. The shining nature of each of the objects differs in quality.

The shining objects may be divided mainly into two categories. Those objects which have natural light come under one group. For instance, the stars and the Sun fall under this group. The moon and the planets come under the second group because their light is not natural to them but borrowed.

Actually, even though the Sun and the stars are supposed to have original or natural light, these objects cannot be held to be in possession of original light. All the authoritative upaniṣads are unanimous on this point.

Our readers may be very familiar with a upaniṣadic mantra which runs as follows:-

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं
नमो विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं
तस्यभासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥

This mantra which is quoted above, occurs in the Kaṭhapaniṣad (5, 15).

The meaning of the mantra is as follows:–

"The Sun does not shine there, nor the moon and the stars, nor these lightnings, and much less this fire.

When that shines, everything shines after that. By its light all this is lighted."

This mantra is very emphatic and clear on the point that even the so-called self-luminaries like the Sun, the stars etc., are not really self-luminaries. Even the so-called luminaries have borrowed shining from another source.

Then, who is that original source of all light ?

According to the Vedantic upaniṣads, the Brahman is the original source. According to Śrīvidya tradition the Supreme Goddess is the original light.

This Aruṇopaniṣad also says that the 'rays are born out of the Goddess'. The commentator of Aruṇopaniṣad says that the Goddess alone is the original producer of light and rays. All other luminaries have borrowed the light from the Goddess.

According to the commentator this mantra is incomplete in conveying a complete sense. Therefore he suggests that the following words: 'The rays that are born out of the Goddess, stand enveloping the entire worlds'.

Two significant facts are contained in this mantra.

1. The rays are born only from her and therefore she is the original producer of all kinds of rays and light.

2. The rays of the Goddess stand enveloping the entire universe which consists of so many big and small bodies.

A question may now arise as to why the rays of the Goddess stand enveloping the entire universe.

In this connection the famous verse of the Saundarya Laharī (14) may be considered.

The śloka runs like this:—

क्षितौ षट्पञ्चाशद्द्विसमधिकपञ्चाशदुदके
हुताशे द्वाषष्टिश्चतुरधिकपञ्चाशदनिले ।
दिवि दिष्षट्त्रिंशन्मनसि च चतुष्षष्टिरिति ये
मयूखास्तेषामप्युपरि तव पादाम्बुजयुगम् ॥

The meaning of the śloka may be this:-

Fifty-six rays shine in the Mūladhara comprised of the element of Earth (Pṛthvī tatva).

Fifty-two rays shine in the Maṇipūra of the essence of Water (Ap tatva).

Sixty-two in the Svadhiṣṭhana (the Agnī or Tejas tatva) being of the nature of Fire.

Fifty-two in the Anahata of the character of Air (Vayu tatva).

Seventy-two rays in the Visuddhi of the form of Ether (Akaśa tatva) and

Sixty-four in the Ājña (Manas tatva).

Far above all these shine the pair of Thy Lotus Feet.

In the above quoted verse a detailed account of the number of rays associated with each of the bodily centres is mentioned. The details help us to develop our spirituality by associating ourselves with the rays.

Those who are interested in knowing more about the internal and external worship of this type may refer to modern and ancient commentaries of the Saundarya Laharī.

When we consider the next Section we will understand that the total number of rays emenating from the Goddess is 360 and when we total the individual number attached to each of the spiritual centres starting from the Mūladhara down to the two feet of the Goddess, we will get a grand total of 360.

In the next Section we will explain how the number 360 is identified with the 360 days of the year.

The Śrīvidya worshipper is prescribed with this type of dhyana to feel his identity with the 'year' and through the 'year' he identifies himself with the Goddess who is the original producer of these 360 rays.

Those who undertake this type of meditation come closer to the concept of light which is a necessary step to go further in spirituality.

The last line of the commentary under this Section 11, says that the shining nature of the Sun, Moon and Agni is actually due to the grace of the rays born from the Goddess.

The commentator through this statement wants to stress on the fact that the Sun and Agni which are popularly considered to be in possession of original light are really not the possessers of original light.

As the Moon is shining only with the borrowed light, the Sun and Agni also borrow the light from the Goddess.

The commentator in this connection uses the word 'Prasada' which means 'the grace'. The Goddess has allowed the Sun and Agni to borrow her light because she is pleased with the sincerity of these objects.

Also the Sun, Moon and Agni have been created by her to discharge the cosmic function of emenating various

kinds of heat and light to help the living beings to derive necessary power for fulfilling their own duties in their turn.

Section 12

The mantra which engaged our attention in the previous Section was mainly introducing the rays connected with the Goddess. The pervious mantra revealed two important facts about the rays. The first significant information about the rays was that the rays are born out of the Goddess. The second information was to inform us of the fact that the rays stand enveloping the entire worlds.

We have already presented our exposition on the various aspects of the mantra in the pervious Section.

This Section 12 also continues to add more information on the rays of the Goddess.

In this Section the mantra informs us that there are 360 rays which are born out of the Goddess.

We shall now try to understand the importance of the number 360 mentioned here.

It may be pointed out in this context that Śrīvidyā is also known as Candrakalā vidyā. The word 'Candrakalā vidyā' is not prominently mentioned in the Aruṇopariṣat commentary. However, the word is incidentally mentioned in Section 22 and elsewhere in the same commentary.

But Lakṣmīdhara, one of the earliest and most important of the commentators, is very fond of this word. In fact in his opinion the entire 100 verses of the

Saundarya Laharī is called 'Candrakalā'. Of all the commentators of Saundarya Laharī, Lakṣmīdhara seems to be most fond of this name 'candrakalā.'

Many reasons may be attributed to explain Lakṣmīdhara's fondness over this name.

The worship of the Goddess in the Śrīvidyā tradition is mainly based on the worship of the 15 or 16 presiding deities of the days (including nights). One set of 15 or 16 Lunar days are classified as days of the bright side (Śukla pakṣa) and the other set of 15 or 16 days are classified as the dark side (Kṛṣṇa pakṣa). The Tantra Raja Tantra which is one of the most popular texts of the Śrīvidyā tradition deals with these sixteen presiding deities of these 16 phases of the moon and their worship, in a detailed manner. Those who are interested in the worship of these deities may consult the Tantra Raja Tantra.

The same worship of the 16 deities is included in the Śrīcakra pūjā in a brief manner. In the Śrīvidyā pūjā there is a Section called Nityadevī yajanam. In this the Nityā deities starting from Kāmeśvarī to Citrā are individually worshipped along the central triangle which is found immediately around the central Bindu.

All these facts go to prove that the presiding deities of the 15 or 16 days of the Lunar phases are given importance in the Śrīcakra pūjā. This means that the Śrīcakra worship or the Śrīvidyā tradition has a special place for the 'days of the month or year'.

In this context we must read the Aruṇopaniṣat mantra of this Section which says that the rays of the Goddess are 360 in number. It is a well-known fact that these 360 days alone are responsible for constituting the year.

In other words, the mantra informs us that the days are not really 'days' but they are only the 'rays' of the Goddess.

It is plainly known to us that the entire function of the practical world is carried out because of the rotation of the days forming a scheme and a cycle. If there is no rotation of the kāla cakra the practical world would be standing still and no activity is possible in this world.

The commentators of Śrīvidyā texts seem to be very much interested in explaining the concept of Time as connected with the Goddess. Jayaratha, one of the earliest commentators of the Śrīvidyā tradition while explaining the concept of Time quotes a famous verse from the Iśvara Pratyabhijñā.

The same verse is also quoted by other famous writers of Śrīvidyā tradition. The verse runs as follows:—

कालः सूर्यादिसञ्चारस्तत्तत्पुष्पादिजन्म वा ।
शीतोष्णे वाथ तल्लक्ष्यः क्रम एव स तत्वतः ॥ (3)

This is translated by the authorities as follows:—

'Time in reality is nothing else than the succession, observable in the movement of the Sun etc., in the birth (janma) of different flowers and in summer and winter.'

The famous commentator of this text says: 'And this particular nature of the Sun etc., to appear with certain fixed limitations, is in reality succession, it is nothing else. And this succession itself and nothing else is the time.'

Jayaratha is interested in borrowing the Kashmir Śaiva concepts on Time, to prove that the Goddess is actually responsible for the Time. It is her rays that originate from her, create the Time.

In this way it may be proved that the concept of Time is very closely connected with the Goddess. Therefore in order to create time and make it function, the Goddess originates the rays so that the 'days' may come into being and consequently the 'year' may be born to infuse activity in this practical world without which the practical world would stand still.

Any god connected with Creation will have close connection with Time. Therefore the Vedas speak of Prajāpati, the creator god, as identical with time. The quotation used by the commentator says 'Verily, the year is Prajāpati'.

Although Prajāpati creates the worlds assisted by his helpers, according to Śrīvidyā tradition it is the Goddess who has empowered Prajāpati and others to create with the help rendered by Time. This mantra, therefore, speaks of the rays as the year.

Section 13

The basic idea which was begun in Section 11 is continued in this Section also. Previously it was stated that the rays are born out of the Goddess and the rays envelop the entire worlds. Then it was stated that the rays are 360 in number and they were identified with year and Time in general.

In this Section some more significant ideas about the rays are revealed. This mantra categorically says that the rays constitute the divine body of the Goddess.

As it is known to every one of us, when we speak of a body of the Goddess or other physical features of the Goddess it should not be taken to mean the physical aspects of the Goddess actually. The words 'physical body, actually mean symbolically something which is comparable to our physical body. It is only to make some hidden idea clear and it should not be taken in the literal sense.

For our easy understanding of some inexplicable ideas the religious texts use such symbolic ideas.

The word 'deham' used in the mantra means some visible signs of the Goddess in her personal role as the Mother Goddess. In her personal nature, she has a face and many usual limbs of a normal body. In this respect she is considered to be in possession of a body which is made up of the 'rays'.

The rays, thus, play a vital role in the cosmic process of creation. The Goddess acts in many important ways through the rays. But this should not lead us to think too much of the rays. In other words, her rays should never think of themselves as being more important than the Goddess herself.

The Goddess is supreme and she does not depend on any object or person to achieve anything. She appears to act through something or somebody but this is only a divine play. She, in fact, acts through herself.

It is to emphasise on this significant point the commentator says 'let the rays take resort in the body of the Goddess.

This statement clearly proves that her body is not the 'rays'. If the 'rays' themselves happen to be her real body, then they cannot take resort in her 'body'.

Having cleared this point emphatically, the commentator goes on to explain the actual meaning of the word 'deham'.

In the popular language 'deham' means the 'body in general' which is made up of the face, the hands, the feet etc.

The commentator says that even though the word 'body' means the entire 'body', in this particular context the word is used in the mantra in a special and restricted sense.

He says that the word 'body' means 'the two feet' of the Goddess.

Although each of the limbs of the body is important in its own way, as far as the Goddess is concerned the most important limb is her feet.

Usually in devotional texts three or four limbs of the God would be given importance. They are. the face or the eyes, the palms and the feet.

Still in the earliest Vedic text known as the Ṛgveda, the greatness of the feet was stressed especially with the

concept of Viṣṇu. The most important idea attached to Viṣṇu is connected with his feet with which he measured or crossed the Universe in three strides. Therefore focus is given to Viṣṇu's feet in the early Vedic texts.

The highest place of achievement for a human being is to attain to the feet of Viṣṇu, 'tad viṣṇoḥ paramam padam.'

This idea is continued in the later texts especially in the devotional texts in which the feet of the God is given more importance than the God himself.

In Śrīvidya tradition also the feet of the Goddess get a special significance. One or two illustrations may be offered here to make the idea more clear.

First, the Lalita Sahasranama says in its 44th name as follows: –

नख–दीधिति–संचन्न–नमज्जन–तमोगुणा

'She is the one who wards off the inner darkness of her devotees who prostrate before her feet by the light of the nails (of her feet).'

The same idea is expanded in the verses of the Saundarya Laharī. In verse 2, 3 and 4, the great potency of the lotus feet of the Goddess is brought forth very emphatically.

The second verse runs as follows:

तनीयांसं पांसु तवचरणपङ्केरुहभवं
विरिञ्चिस्संचिन्वन् विरचयति लोकानविकलम् ।

वहत्येनं शौरिः कथमपि सहस्रेण शिरसां
हरस्संक्षुद्यैनं भजति भसितोद्धूलनविधिम्

The meaning of the verse is:—

Collecting microscopic particles of the dust falling from thy lotus-feet, Brahmā creates the worlds in regular order (intact), Viṣṇu (in the form of Ādiśeṣa) bears them somehow with great effort (might) though with thousand heads and Śiva reducing the particles into ashes besmears his body with them (vibhūti).

The central idea of this verse is this :

The creation, protection and destruction of the entire Universe have become possible for Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva respectively, only through the power derived by them from the Goddess. This gives evidence to the greatness of the feet of the Goddess.

The third verse runs as follows :

अविद्यानामन्तस्तिमिर मिहिरद्वीपनगरी
जडानां चैतन्य स्तबक मकरन्द स्तुतिझरी ।
दरिद्राणां चिन्तामणिगुणनिका जन्मजलधौ
निमग्नानां दंष्ट्रा मुररिपु वराहस्य भवति ॥

The meaning of the verse is :-

The particles of dust of thy lotus feet serve to remove the inner darkness of the ignorant. In other words, the dust is the Sun that dispels the inner darkness of the ignorant or the worldly-minded.

The speck of the dust is a flood of fragrance emanating from the bunch of flowers of the kalpaka tree of caitanya or clear consciousness, awakening the unknowing or dull-witted.

To those who are in the grip of chill penury, the dust particles are a string of gems of the cintāmaṇi variety.

And to those drowned in the ocean of earthly existence (Samsāra) that dust becomes the tusk of the wild boar of Muraripu i.e., Viṣṇu who incarnated as Varāha (to save the worlds from the deluge).

The central idea of this verse is that the feet of the Goddess is symbolically explained through various identifications. She bestows to her devotees more than what they desire for. The greatest feat that she performs is that she is the resurrector from worldly bondage which no other god or gods can do.

But her lotus feet achieves what cannot be performed by the multitude of gods.

The verse 4 also continues the same idea:

त्वदन्यः पाणिभ्यामभयवरदो दैवतगणः
त्वमेका नैवासि प्रकटितवराभीत्यभिनया ।
भयात् त्रातुं दातुं फलमपि च वांछासमधिकं
शरण्ये लोकानां तवहि चरणावेवनिपुणौ ॥

The meaning of the verse is:

Thou, the refuge of all the worlds! All the Devas (gods) except thee, vouchsafe protection to devotees and grant their desires by the gestures of their hands. Thou alone doth not show forth the 'varada' and 'abhaya' (granting and protecting) gestures. It is so because, thy feet are by themselves powerful to protect those in the grip of fear and grant more than what is desired for by the devotees.

The central idea of this verse is this:—

The word abhaya means assurance of freedom from fear; the right hands of most of the icons of the Hindu deities (generally) has the 'abhaya' posture i.e. with fingers pointing downwards indicating grant of boons.

But those poses of hands are generally not found in the case of the Goddess' icons.

The word 'vara' connotes satisfaction of all desires or Kāma.

What the author (i.e. Śrī Śankara) wants to say here is that the worship of the feet of the Goddess is capable of granting by her feet what is normally done by the other gods by their hands.

In fact the entire Śrīcakra pūjā is designed as the worship of the feet of the Goddess. In fact in the Śrīvidya pūjā mostly the worship is done on Śrīcakra where physical features of the Goddess are subtly available.

Still the formulas of the Śrīcakra pūjā prescribe that every offering of flower or viseṣa arghya is to be necessarily accompanied by the mantra:—

श्रीपादुकां पूजयामि तर्पयामि नमः ।

The worship is thus offered to the Goddess only with reference to her holy feet. The pūja as well as the 'tarpaṇa' (the offering of water or specially made liquid) is addressed to the sacred feet of the Goddess which alone are invoked for the blessings.

Section 14

Having described about the rays of the Goddess and some other closely connected matters the mantra which is stated in this Section makes a prayer to the Goddess.

The mantra uses the word 'ख्या' which is the shortened form of the word 'ख्याति:' which means fame. Therefore the commentator first interprets the word as meaning 'fame'.

Fame, it must be remembered, is one of the important goals of human life as far as the Śrīvidya tradition is concerned. According to this tradition every human being is meant to acquire fame while living in this world.

Fame may be acquired by anybody by developing the inborn qualities inbeded in each individual. Every one of us is in possession of some special qualities. The individual, after understanding the hidden special qualities in him, should try to improve them through proper methods and training.

As we develop the qualities in us, we are most likely to acquire fame in that field.

In fact every one of us should sincerely aspire to acquire fame in the proper manner.

In this connection it may be pointed out that 'fame' cannot be acquired by our mere efforts. Our efforts should be regulated in such a way that it leads us to acquire fame.

But unless we have qualified ourselves to receive the grace of the Goddess our mere efforts cannot achieve fame.

Therefore this mantra, on our behalf, appeals to the Goddess to continue to be the recipient of her valuable grace.

Her grace will certainly be on us if we are sincere in our heart and efforts. We should know how to win her favour.

The commentator, after having interpreted the word as meaning 'fame', offers another meaning for the word 'khyā'.

He thinks that the word 'khyā' in this context means not merely 'fame' but 'knowledge of the Goddess'.

Here, Śrīvidyā comes very close to Advaita.

As we know, the fundamental aim of the human life is to become one with the Highest Principle called Brahman or Goddess.

The question arises, how to be one with her ?

The various religious and philosophical systems of India suggest different ways and means to reach Brahman or Goddess. These systems appear to quarrel among

themselves. But the truth is that so many systems have come into being to suit the need of various individuals who can be uplifted only by certain methods. If we understand that these systems exist for our convenience then we cannot misunderstand any of them.

These systems use different terminologies which appear to be contradictory to one another. In fact these terminologies finally mean the same idea and in order to realize this fact one should develop that level of qualification.

The Śrīvidyā system, even though it appears to recommend various methods initially, finally it strongly recommends only 'knowledge' which results in us because of these various methods that we have followed.

Śrī Rāmānuja may try to stress on the concept of 'bhakti' or 'surrender' but he in his heart of heart means a concept which is nothing but 'knowledge'.

Śrī Śankara openly advocates the cause of knowledge throughout his writings. When Śaṅkara stresses on the concept of 'knowledge' he does not mean the usually understood concept of knowledge. He uses the word in a deeply spiritual sense to mean the intuitive knowledge which comes into being as a result bhakti, surrender, viveka and other means.

When the worshipper involves himself in all these traditionally accepted 'means' he pleases the Supreme Goddess who finally showers her grace which generates the intuitive knowledge in him.

It is this intuitive knowledge that is meant here in the commentary.

The process of gaining this intuitive knowledge may be briefly stated here.

Let us first believe in an ordinary way that there is a Supreme Goddess who is all—merciful and compassionate.

Slowly let us become deeply involved in the belief and convert it into a firm-rooted idea in us.

Then let us try to understand that she is such a supremely beautiful personality with many auspicious limbs.

From this let us understand that she is not merely beautiful but capable of so many wonderful acts, small and big.

Let us at this stage try to understand all her qualities which are enumerated in texts like Saundarya Laharī and Lalitā Sahasranāma and such other texts.

Let us then understand that we require her divine grace to obtain the required knowledge.

Let us start the process of meditation through which we may slowly go near her inner personality.

The understanding of her inner personality would naturally lead us to know more about the worldy and cosmic responsibilities.

Finally we shall gain through our sojourn in spirituality the real knowledge.

This is what is prayed in this mantra.

Section 15

In the editions in which Aruṇopaniṣat and the commentary are found, we can notice that the line which has been classified here as Section 15, is only an introduction to the mantra which is quoted in Section 16.

The one line introduction has been separated in this work to form Section 15. The reason for doing this is obvious.

It has been stated in the earlier Sections that the Śrīvidya tradition gives more emphasis on the practical side of it rather than on its theoretical side.

It was also made clear in the previous Sections that there are hundreds of practical manuals available in Śrīvidya which instruct the worshippers on the actual performance of Śrīvidya or Śrīcakra worship. This is really a peculiarity found only in this tradition.

The Aruṇopaniṣat after having talked about many important aspects of Śrīvidya comes to say something about the actual practice of the ritual in Section 16.

Therefore the Commentator introduces the mantra of the Section 16, by a statement. In this connection he says that 'from this mantra onwards the Pṛśnī sages interested in the practice of Śrīvidya worship consult one another'.

Although the remark of the commentator appears to mean that the rest of the Aruṇopaniṣadic mantras are devoted to the details of the practice of Śrīvidya worship, it may be found that the Section 16 alone strictly devotes itself to the practice of the worship. Hence, 'from this mantra onwards' actually means 'in Section 16 alone'.

The remark of the commentator tries to mislead us when he says that 'the mantras are devoted to the details of the practice of Śrīvidya worship'.

If we consult any practical manual of 'Śrīvidya tradition, we will come to understand that the manual deals with many types of rituals in an elaborate manner. Therefore we should not except that in Section 16 there would be details of all types these of Śrīvidya rituals.

Very soon we will find in Section 16 that it deals with only one type of ritual in a general manner. The readers should therefore understand 'now onwards' means that 'the Section 16 alone deals with the ritual and that too deals with only one ritual'.

We have already remarked in earlier Sections that there are two main divisions in the followers of Śrīvidya worship. One set of worshippers indulges in the practice of elaborate and external rituals.

At the same time another set of worshippers indulges in the mental worship of Śrīvidya. These worshippers do not believe in any external worship and they do all the *pūjas* mentally.

It was already pointed out that Lakṣmīdhara who has written a commentary on Saundarya Laharī is a very strong follower of internal worship which is also known as Samayacara.

It must be noted that the Samayacara followers do not ignore or hate rituals. They equally love rituals as the external worshippers love them.

The most important difference between them is that the Samayacarins internalise all rituals and undertake to do all rituals mentally without any external objects or rituals.

The Commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat, as pointed out earlier, is a strong follower of Samayacara. Therefore he is not interested in the external worship.

Perhaps he believes that one of the most important rituals is what he is going to describe in Section 16. We have already remarked that the Samayacarins believe in the release of ambrosia from the head-centre. The ritual which will be described in Section 16 also deals with the release of ambrosia from the Sahasrara centre.

Section 16

The mantra which is found in this Section is very important to us is in many ways. Those who read this mantra for the first time will immediately remember another Upaniṣadic mantra which is found in the Kaṭhopaniṣad and which has become very famous.

The Kaṭhopaniṣad mantra runs as follows:—

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत । (3, 14)

This means:

Arise (O, Creatures! turn your face towards the acquisition of spiritual knowledge. O, aspirants! immersed in the worldly affairs, cease thinking of various worldly matters). Awake (destroy the sleep of ignorance, the seed

of all miseries) leave of laziness. Having approached and having obtained the elect, the best of Teachers (or the Great Ones, the High Ones, understand (the true nature of the Lord).

It will thus be understood that both the mantras convey almost the same central idea.

The Pṛśni sages after making a prayer to the Goddess in the last mantra (Section 14) now give proper instructions to us. It is difficult to say whether the Kaṭhopaniṣat constructed the above quoted mantra on the model of this mantra (of the Aruṇopaniṣat) or the Aruṇopaniṣat constructed the mantra on the model of the Kaṭhopaniṣat. Whatever be the case the similarity of the central ideas found in these two mantras is really striking.

India is one of the rare countries which has been highly spiritual from time immemorial. Indians, especially of the Vedic and later sages, have gone very deep in spirituality and they have discovered many top secrets of spiritual paths.

As it has been mentioned in one of the earlier Sections of this exposition, the sages have learnt these spiritual truths not for their personal advancement. They have learnt them only to teach them to all those who qualify themselves for getting these spiritual truths. In fact the teachers think that their primary and unavoidable duty is to impart them to the qualified students.

We must very proudly note the word 'Bhārataḥ' occurring in this mantra. In the popular usage of the word it denotes the 'Indians' in general. Those who have come in the tradition of Bharata (this means generally the sons

of Bharata, the son of Duṣyanta) are called Bharatas, a term used to denote Indians in general.

The word 'Bharatas' used in this mantra, from one point of view, may be interpreted as meaning all Indians in general.

It must be remembered that the unitary concept of 'India' as one nation was there in the Vedic age. This shows that the Vedas are meant for all Indians without any region or class or section. They are concerned only with Indians as a whole. Such a great text like the Veda, can never discriminate between Indians.

This great tradition established by the Vedas should be stressed in the modern days in which Indians have become more and more parochial in all their outlook and action.

But in the Vedas which came into existence historically some 4000 years ago, India was seen as one country and all the people of India were seen only as Indians even though we have every reason to believe that some kind of language and cultural divisions were in existence in those days.

Still the Aruṇopaniṣat chose to address all the people as 'Bharataḥ' to make us understand that this type of national consciousness alone should be given all importance.

The commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat goes many steps forward to give an extended interpretation for the word Bharatas'.

The commentator gives two important interpretations to the word 'Bharatas'.

In the first interpretation he says that the word भारता: should be spilt as भा and रता:. According to him the word 'भा' means light 'रता:' means 'those who are interested'. Therefore भारता: means those who are interested in Light.

Light in this context means the desire for spiritual activities and action undertaken to achieve the goal of spirituality.

Having interpreted the word as meaning 'light' the commentator says that 'light' in this context means Sarasvatī or 'Śrīvidya' or 'Śrīcakra'.

In this interpretation 'Bharataḥ' is not confined to any political boundary. Anybody, irrespective of any nationality, race or religion, if he is interested in Śrīvidya, he is fully qualified to be the 'Bharata'. By this the entire humanity is included in this term.

We will have a more proper occasion to bring out the universal nature of Śrīvidya tradition in Section 26. Still in this context also it may be said that of all the aspects of Hinduism, Śrīvidya is plainly and properly universal.

There is no restriction to adopt the Śrīvidya tradition for any person. The only condition that is prescribed is that the aspirant should have a sincere desire to seek the light which is in the form of Śrīvidya or Śrīcakra. With this qualification anybody can seek the tradition of Śrīvidya to improve his inner light by slowly expelling the inner darkness by the methods adopted and prescribed in Śrīvidya.

In this connection the commentator explains his standpoint by quoting an accepted grammatical dictum.

This dictum says that the interpreter can restrict a general idea to mean a particularized idea. Similarly, the interpreter has the freedom of expanding a particular idea beyond its usual limitations.

What the commentator means is this: The word 'Bharatas' generally means any person of India or of Indian origin. At the same time Bharatas, instead of meaning 'a person in the lineage of the Bharatas' can also be extended to cover all persons who have interest in Śrīvidya. In this interpretation the word has a particularized sense of 'the worshipper of Śrīvidya' but at the same time it has an extended sense of including any human being who has interest in Śrīvidya.

Therefore we may take that the word 'Bharatas' means an address made to all those human beings who have some kind of interst in Śrīvidya.

The mantra directs all the human beings to arise leaving all their sleep and indifference.

A mere 'arising' is not enough. One must arise and one should at the same time be alert in a deep sense.

Why should we arise and be alert ?

The mantra says that we should hereafter engage ourselves in the system of worship of Śrīvidya.

What type of worship of Śrīvidya is meant here?

The mantra says that we should inflame the fire which is found in our Svadhiṣṭhana centre.

Most or all of our readers would be very familiar with the fact that there are six spiritual centres in our body along with the course of our spinal chord. The six centres were mentioned in a previous Section and still we can mention them here also for the convenience of our readers.

The centre which is located at the bottom most portion of our spinal chord is called Mūladhara. The second centre is located at the region where our sexual organs are found. This is called Svadhisṭhana centre.

The third centre is located at the region of our navel. This is called Maṇipūraka centre. The fourth is located at the region of our heart. This is called Anahata centre.

The fifth centre is located at the region of our neck and this is called Visuddhi centre. The sixth is located in the region of our eye-brows and this is called Āñja centre.

Above these centres there is a centre at the region of our brain and this is called the Sahasrara centre.

It is a well-known fact that our spiritual power is in the Mūladhara centre and in this the power, which is usually compared to a snake, sleeps coiling its body. Most of the human beings never try to wake up this sleeping power and all through the life of these people. The power remains in sleep and therefore people die after sometime as ordinary people.

Any spiritual activity starts with the awakening of this serpent power, also called Kuṇḍalini power. Therefore

anybody who wants to enter into spirituality should first wake up the Kuṇḍalinī power.

The power cannot be made to wake up without the proper guidance of a competent guru. Those who are interested in waking the power up, may contact a proper guru and attempt slowly and carefully to wake up the power.

After waking up the power, there is a very important act which should be done by the aspirant with reference to the second centre called Svādhiṣṭhāna.

The mantra of this 16th Section is concerned only with the activities connected with the Svādhiṣṭhāna centre.

It has already been pointed out that the Svādhiṣṭhāna centre is located in the region of our sexual organs and therefore the Svādhiṣṭhāna centre is supposed to be in possession of this sexual power which is compared to a powerful fire.

The mantra says 'inflame the fire which is found in your Svādhiṣṭhāna centre'. Now the power of this fire is in a dormant state. Even though it is fire it has neither flames nor enough heat. The mantra wants to inflame the fire, first by waking up the Kuṇḍalinī.

As soon as the Kuṇḍalinī power is disturbed from the Mūlādhāra centre, the power reaches the second centre and as a result of which the fire which is at present dormant becomes active and it starts flaming and gains proper heat.

Slowly by our constant and regulated spiritual Sādhana, the fire of Svādhiṣṭhāna gathers more flames and

the flames increase their height in such a way that they go up to the level of Visuddhi centre which is above the Anahata centre.

In between the Anahata and Visuddhi centres there is another hot object which is considered to be in possession of the Solar power.

When the flames of the fire of the Svadhiṣṭhana centre reaches the Anahata-Visuddhi centres, the flames are joined with the solar power and thus the power of the Svadhiṣṭhana centre gets doubled.

Now with a reinforced power, the flames reach still a higher level and rises upto the level of the Sahasrara centre. We have often remarked that in the Sahasrara centre there is a cold substance containing the divine ambrosial power. This power which is considered to be related to the Moon is in a crystalized form before the flames arising out of the combined force of Agni and Sūrya reach the Sahasrara.

As soon as the flames of Agni (of the Svadhiṣṭhana centre) and Sūrya (of the Anahata-Visuddhi centres) attack the Sahasrara centre with their excessive heat the crystalized power of the Moon at the Sahasrara centre starts melting and the divine ambrosia of the Moon starts flowing downwards into all the 'naḍis' which have already been numbered as 72000 and which are found all over the body.

Once the worshipper makes this spiritual feat, slowly all his afflictions which are in the form of previous karma and other forms of karma, are purified that the worshipper becomes completely pure in such a way that he can now advance further in spirituality.

We have already explained in Section 7, that the Bhūtasuddhi ritual takes care of this purification from one point of view. Similarly in all Śrīvidya ritual texts there is a ritual which is prescribed to be done during the early morning hours.

This early morning ritual is found in some what detailed manner in Paraśurama Kalpa Sūtra' in the ritual worship of Mahagaṇapati and Śrīkrama. paraśurama wants us to get up at about 4-4.30 AM and we should remain seated on the bed. We must focus our attention on the Sahasrara centre where a 1000 petalled lotus is found. In the middle of the lotus we must think of the two divine feet of the Lord who is none else than our teacher. We must also imagine that from the two feet there is profuse ambrosial liquid oozing out and it drenches all the 72000 naḍis of our body. This type of imagination would purify us.

This is what the commentator means when he explains the word 'उषस:' at the bottom portion of Section 16.

Section 16(A)

We have already taken into consideration a portion of the ideas contained in Section 16 (A) in our introductory remarks of this book. Therefore we may ignore those portions now and come straight to consider the interpretation of the mantra as offered by the great Bhaskararaya.

Bhaskararaya is in complete agreement with the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat in holding the view that the term 'Bharatas' means Sarasvatī also known as Bharatī.

According to Bhaskararaya, 'Bharatas' are those who have an interest in Bharatī. This shows that Bhaskararaya also accepts the word to mean the entire human race without any reservation.

All those who have respect for Śrīvidya are qualified to be called 'Bharatas'.

Bhaskararaya agrees with the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat in interpreting the other words of this mantra.

He compares the will-power of the devotees to a strong stick. Bhaskararaya wants the stick to be strong for the main reason that it should serve as a fuel to burn till the goal is achieved.

It is known to all of us that if we want the fire to burn, it must necessarily have some kind of fuel so that the fire can exist and burn catching hold of this fuel.

Therefore he wants the worshipper to prepare a strong stick made out of the deep-rooted will-power of the devotee.

As mentioned in the previous Section this fire starting from the Svadhiṣṭhana centre would reach slowly the Anahata—Visuddhi centres and join with the solar energy already existing in between the Anahata—Visuddhi centres. As a combined force of Agnī and Sūrya the flames would be very powerful to melt the Candramaṇḍala.

The words 'राज्ञ: सोमस्य' are interpreted by Bhaskararaya and the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat as meaning 'the king of kings' who is none else than Lord Paramaśiva.

It will be explained in Section 22 that Lord Paramaśiva is permanently stationed in the Sahasrara centre in the Candramaṇḍala which is the spiritual moon present at the Sahasrara centre of all the devotees.

It is in this Sahasrara centre 'the queen of queens' Uma comes to stay very often. Uma comes to this centre to be in union with her husband Lord Parameśvara.

When the heat of Agnī and Sūrya attacks severely the Sahasrara centre by their excessive power the union of Lord Paramaśiva and Uma generates a divine ambrosial flow which would pass through the 72000 naḍis to purify the whole body of the worshipper.

When the ambrosial flow flows' it gives us a complete satisfaction spiritually and we become worthy of further advancement in higher spirituality.

This is the direction given by this mantra.

In his remarks under Section 16 (A) Bhaskararaya offers two grammatical observations.

In the Vedic times it was usual to add to some words the plural ending two times. This is explained by Pāṇini in his Sūtra 7-1-50. He calls it 'Asuk' augment which means 'double plural signs' for the same word.

Another grammatical remark explains how in some contexts we must assume a causative sense to a word which is in the active voice. The two roots 'uttiṣṭh' and 'svap' bear only an active sense to mean 'get up' and 'do not sleep'. But Bhāskararāya thinks that these words inherently carry a causative sense to mean 'awake your

fire of Svādhiṣṭhāna and 'do not cause yourselves to be indifferent'. The causative sense is assumed on the authority of the Sanskrit Grammer which sanctions the sense 'अन्तभावित 'णि' अर्थे'.

Section 17

Although the word 'इत:परम्' has been translated as 'From now onwards', as explained by us earlier, the sense is 'in this Section' and not actually 'from now onwards'. The idea is not continued further and so we will take it to mean 'in this Section'. The Pṛśnī sages instruct us about the materials required for the Śrīcakra Pūjā.

We must also take into consideration that there are no elaborate details given about the Pūjā material in this Section. As stated earlier, the commentator is a strong believer of Samayācāra which recognises only the internal pūjā.

In the external Pūjā of Śrīcakra many materials are required to execute the worship. First of all we require an external Śrīcakra. We require proper pedestal to place the Śrīcakra and other worship-materials.

We also require flowers, water and other needed liquids for the Pūjā. We need some ornaments to be worn by the worshipper at the time of the Pūjā.

Further we need various kinds of utensils to perform the Pūja. We also need various kinds of food and eatables to be offered to the Goddess.

All these and more are required to perform the external Pūja of Śrīcakra.

The commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat being a follower of Samayācāra may not prescribe all these above mentioned materials. In fact the internal Pūjā does not need any external materials for the Pūjā.

Still the commentator says that the worshipper needs to wear शुभ्रवस्त्र which has been translated to mean 1. clean clothes and 2. white clothes. The commentator also says that the worshipper is to wear worthy ornaments and use white or clean flowers during the pūjā time.

The commentator in spite of the fact that he is a Samayācārin prescribes some unavoidable external materials as mentioned above.

In the Śrīvidyā tradition even in modern days there are some worshippers who wear red clothes during the pūjā time. They clad in red-coloured silks in two pieces, one to wear and the other to be used us upper garment.

These people use various kinds of red flowers to be offered to the Goddess.

In the opinion of these people red colour is most suited for Goddess worship. As she is red in complexion she would be pleased with the red-coloured clothes and flowers.

But the commentator uses the 'शुभ्र' which means both 'white' and 'clean'. Perhaps the commentator does not think that red-colour is very essential. As long as the cloth is white or clean, it serves the purpose.

In the modern days in the north Indian and Kerala traditions the wearing of white cloths is often seen with

the worshipper when he goes to temples and other sacred places. White is an accepted colour associated with the pūja. Therefore the commentator suggests this under this mantra.

Actually the original word found in the mantra is सुवासा which means 'a good cloth'.

We now come to another remark of the commentator.

The mantra makes use of the word युवा. This word in ordinary Sanskrit means 'youthful'. We have translated it as 'the strong-li nbed, the healthy persons'.

Does it mean that only the youth are qualified to perform the pūja and the old people are forbidden from doing the Śrīvidya pūja?

Let us discuss this point.

In this connection it must be pointed out that the Śrīvidya tradition gives stress on the development of physical body as well as the spiritual body.

There is a general feeling among the religious people that the physical body does not deserve attention as our inner body.

This is a wrong notion as far as Śrīvidya tradition is concerned.

The Śrīvidya tradition wants that every person who follows the dictates of the Śrīvidya texts should give enough stress on the development of the physical body. The physical body should always be kept intact so that it does

not create any problem or 'impediment' in the execution of Śrīvidya ideals.

What is important is that there should not be over emphasis on the physical side. But the required care of the physical body is to be given certainly.

One may grow old in the physical body but one should never become weak in body. The Śrīvidya follower should take enough care to see that his physical body is hale and healthy irrespective of the age.

That is why there is a portion in the Śrīcakra which is called 'sarva roga hara cakra' which means that the Śrīvidya worship would automatically ward off all diseases'.

This has been included as part of Śrīcakra pūja to emphasise on the fact that all Śrīvidya worshippers should try to maintain a good physique. This physique is required to engage the worshipper either in the external pūja or in the meditative internal pūja without any disturbance to the pūja or meditation.

If the physique is weak or sick the worshipper can never indulge in the worship with a concentrated mind. Therefore this mantra stresses on the care of keeping the physical body intact.

Section 18

Throughout the earlier Sections the commentator has been referring to the Śrīcakra very often. But in order to refer to it he has been relying not on any direct reference found in Aruṇopaniṣat.

For instance, in the first mantra itself the commentator was meaning the Śrīcakra but the original Sanskrit word which the commentator took as referring to the Śrīcakra was the word 'इमा—इमां' which means 'this' but the commentator was confident that 'this' means 'this Śrīcakra'.

In short it may be said that there was no direct word in the 1st mantra to express the meaning 'Śrīcakra'.

In this Section 18 also, the Commentator says that this mantra refers to the nature of the Śrīcakra.

The words which prompted the commentator to assume like this is the word 'aṣṭa cakra' and 'nava dvara'.

Let us see the commentary of the Aruṇopaniṣat.

According to the commentator the aṣṭa cakra are the following:-

1. The eight central triangles which are found immediately around the Central Bindu.

2 & 3. The two inner and outer ten triangles which are found around the previously mentioned eight triangles.

4. The fourteen triangles found around the inner and outer ten triangles.

5. The eight petals which are found around the fourteen triangles.

6. The sixteen petals which are found around the eight petals.

7. The three circular lines which sorround the six teen petals.

8 The three squares which are found as the outer most constituent of the Śrīcak a.

The commentator says that these eight cakras are meant by the mantra when it proclaims 'aṣṭa cakra'.

In fact in the Śrīcakra there are nine units and the ninth unit is represented by the Central Bindu. But the commentator, for reasons best known only to him, leaves out the Bindu cakra.

It is necessary at this point to say that our readers would have seen two types of Śrīcakra drawings which are somewhat popular in these days.

In one of the varieties of the Śrīcakra we would have found the central Bindu placed in the middle of the central triangle whose apex would be facing downwards. This type of Śrīcakra is very popular and in most of the houses and places this cakra would be found.

In the another variety of Śrīcakra we can notice that the central triangle would be with its apex upwards and the Bindu would be found within the somewhat squarical central angle and not in the middle of the central triangle.

This latter variety is accepted as more authoritative by Lakṣmīdhara and some others.

Perhaps the commentator does not want to include the Bindu as a cakra and so he has not mentioned it.

The commentator explains the word 'nava dvāra' as meaning the nine openings.

This point is not clear in the commentary on the Aruṇopaniṣat. It is not clear what he means by the nine openings of the Śrīcakra.

If we take our physical body as a representative of the Śrīcakra we may say that our body has nine gates or openings in the forms of nine indriyas.

In the translation it has been mentioned as 'the nine gates (or openings) in the form of the triangles' but the actual intention of the commentator is not clear for us to interpret, further.

The commentator's dubious remarks are yet to be cleared.

The explanation on the Śrīcakra as given above may lead us to think that the description of Śrīcakra as available in the Aruṇopaniṣat is very scanty. There are many more important aspects with regard to the Śrīcakra and such aspects would require a big volume to exhaust them. From the point of view of the Aruṇopaniṣat and also from the point of view of Samayācāra in which only internal worship is stressed, such elaborate details are not very essential. Perhaps that is why the Aruṇopaniṣat did not care to give more details about the Śrīcakra.

Still it is necessary to add one or two most important details about the Śrīcakra in this Section.

Mostly the Śrīcakra is seen as a line-drawing drawn or engraved on metals like copper, silver and sometimes

even on gold. Sometimes we would see the lines are embossed and sometimes the lines are carved on the surface of the metal sheets. The size of the drawing may vary. This type of Śrīcakra is called Bhūprastara (line-drawing).

There is another variety which is called Meruprastara which is a three-dimension figure. In this each of the sub-cakras (of the Śrīcakra) would be on a higher plane than the previous sub-cakra. For example the outer most sub-cakra which is represented by three squares would occupy the lowest level of space. Finally the Bindu would occupy the highest level in space.

According to experts there are three varieties among the Meruprastara type.

In most of the houses of the followers of Śrīvidya the line-drawing of Śrīvidya would be found and only in rare places the Meruprastara would be seen.

The line-drawing of Śrīcakra is more convenient to handle and that may be one of the reasons of the popularity of this variety of Śrīcakra.

Other details about Śrīcakra may not be very relevant in the context of Aruṇopaniṣat.

Section 19

While the previous mantra described by Śrīcakra, this mantra describes the city in which the Goddess is held to live. It may be remembered that the Goddess as the supreme being, is all-pervading being, she lives through-

out the vast universe occupying every inch of it. Therefore in a general way she may be taken to live everywhere.

As a religion, Śrīvidya accepts this all-pervading concept of the Goddess but in order to facilitate the worshippers, Śrīvidya locates the Goddess in some particular spatial area in the external universe and also in the individual body of the human beings.

This kind of location in the universe and in the individual body is to make the spiritual aspirant focus his concentrated attention on these locations while he indulges himself in deep meditation.

The Aruṇopaniṣat, as usual, is not interested in giving all details about this city of Goddess. The mantra which is discussed in this Section brings out two most important aspects of the city in which the Goddess lives for some practical purposes.

The two descriptions about the city are as follows:-

(a) It is a city of gods and

(b) It is a city which is beyond the reach of those who are less fortunate.

Let us first expand the second idea mentioned above.

The description does not say that the city is beyond the reach of those who are less fortunate.

This simply means that a person should have accumulated enough Puṇya (good karmas) in order to develop

special devotion in the Goddess and such persons alone would have an inner inclination to undertake the pūja in honour of the Goddess. A person who becomes a Śrīvidya follower alone can reach the city of Goddess and all others are really less fortunate and therefore they cannot reach it.

Many authoritative texts in the Śrīvidya tradition categorically say that to become a Śrīvidya devotee one should have been very lucky.

यस्यान्यदेवतानामकीर्तनं जन्मकोटिषु ।
तस्यैव भवति श्रद्धा श्रीदेवीनामकीर्तने ।
चरमे जन्मनि यथा श्रीविद्योपासको भवेत् ।।

यस्य नो पश्चिमं जन्म यदि वा शङ्करः स्वयम् ।
तेनैव लभ्यते विद्या श्रीमत्पञ्जदशक्षरी ।।

मोक्षहेतुर्विद्या च श्रीविद्या नात्र संशयः ।।

The central idea of the above quoted passages is this:—

If a person has praised the other gods in crores of births, to him alone the interest (and faith) comes to praise the name of Śrīdevī.

The 15 lettered vidya is obtained only by him who is in this world in his last birth even if he is Śankara himself.

There is no doubt that Śrīvidya (alone) is the cause of Mokṣa.

All these and other such textual affirmations tell us that of all the spiritual paths discovered by the entire

humanity Śrīvidyā path alone is the most fruitful path and therefore every human being should try to get initiation into Śrīvidyā secrets for progressing in spirituality. Such a person alone is blessed to worship the Goddess and such a person alone is entitled to go to the inside of the city of the Goddess.

Before the worshipper tries to fix the actual personality of the Goddess, it is necessary for him to know the city in which the Goddess is said to live.

Two places are considered as the city of the Goddess. For those who are more interested in the internal worship of the Goddess, the city of the Goddess is located in the Sahasrāra centre. And for those who would like to adopt the external form of worship, the city of Goddess is located in a particular place in the actual external universe.

Aruṇopaniṣat which seems to be more interested in the internal worship, therefore, is not very much concerned with the 'external location' of the city. Still the word 'devānām pūḥ' may be said to indicate the external location also.

The external location of the city is described in minute details in all the Śrīvidyā paddhatis. The same details are given in many authoritative works like Saundarya Laharī, Subhagodaya Stuti and Lalitā Sahasranāma. Those who are interested in knowing about the details of the city may refer to the above mentioned texts. Still, for the sake of the convenience of our readers a brief account of the city is given here:—

In the middle of the ocean of nectar, there is an Island of precious gems of infinite variety.

All round the outskirts of this Island, there are rows of celestial, desire - granting trees like Kalpaka, Santana, Haricandana, Mandara and Parijata.

There is a palatial mansion inside these groves of celestial trees.

The mansion is built of precious celestial gems called Cintamaṇi which have the power to grant all desires.

All round the mansion, there are pleasure gardens of Nīpa and Kadamba trees.

Inside this mansion there are forts made of iron, steel, copper, silver, pañcaloha, gold, puṣparaga, ;Padmaraga, Kometaka, Vajra, Vaiḍūrya, Indranīla, Pearl, Marakata, Pavala, Navaratna and manifold ratna.

There are also forts made of manas, buddhi, ahamkara (and other tatvas).

The forts are also made of the powers of Sūrya, Candra and Manmatha.

Inside these there is a lotus-lake.

In its middle there is a cintamani house.

In the central hall of this, there is a regal seat (simhasana) which has four legs represented by Brahma, Viṣṇu, Rudra and Iśana.

Over this cot is spread a couch which is said to be Paramaśiva.

On this cot sits the Supreme Brahman (Sadaśiva) on whose lap is seated the Goddess who is the queen of the Supreme Brahman.

She is the most beautiful lady who has most charming and auspecious limbs.

The Goddess is to be meditated on in the given background of the details of the city.

There are some more details about the city which are found in these texts. Only a few most important particulars have been given above.

Therefore the city is called the city of the devas as all the gods belong to the city.

As it was pointed out, the city is within the reach of those who are deep devotees of the Goddess. If somebody has not obtained the favour of the Goddess, then he cannot enter into this city. Such people are called the 'less fortunate' people.

To them it is 'ayōdhya' – a city which cannot be reached by them. We should never belong to the 'less fortunate' group. We should become the devotee of the Goddess.

As pointed out in the above paragraphs the city is enveloped by certain forts represented by the 25 tatvas. It is well-known that the Samkhya philosophy recognises these 25 tatvas. But Śrīvidya and some other traditions have added 11 more tatvas above these 25 tatvas and the total tatvas have become 36 in these traditions.

Each of the 25 tatvas represents a 'block' which obstructs the spiritual progress of the aspirant. Therefore in order to progress the worshipper should know how to go beyond these 25 tatvas. Unless the devotee knows the technique of crossing over the 25 tatvas, he cannot reach the Goddess.

That is why in the Śrīvidyā worship, in the second āvaraṇa (stage of ritual), the student is trained to go beyond the tatvas like 'buddhi' at this stage of worship.

The city of Goddess, according to the commentator, is the basis of the 25 tatvas starting from Pṛthvī. The commentator while he accepts the word 'devāḥ' as meaning 'those who have a shining nature' also accepts that the word 'devāḥ' represents the 25 tatvas.

The 25 tatvas will have to be gone through by the methodical training offered in the Śrīvidyā tradition.

The commentator after giving two alternative meanings to this mantra gives a third interpretation also.

In this interpretation, he says that the 'city' means the city of the Sūrya, Candra and Agni. As we have already noticed in the Rudrayāmala verses (quoted as introduction in Section 1), the nature of Sūrya, Candra and Agni is involved in the Śrīcakra. This means that Śrīcakra is a combination of the most powerful energies of these three very powerful luminaries.

As the Śrīcakra is the union of these three forces, it is called in singular term 'pūḥ', otherwise it should have been termed in plural.

The word meaning for 'ayodhyā' has already been explained.

Section 20

The previous Section dealt with the city of Goddess in a detailed manner. The Previous Section also informed us that in the middle of the city the Goddess is present in a magificiant manner.

In this Section the mantra tries to tell us that in the middle of the city there is a Śrīcakra. Those who read both the mantras may think that there is contradiction between these two Sections.

What is there in the middle of the city? Is it the personality of the Goddess or is it the Śrīcakra?

The answer is that the Goddess is none else than the Śrīcakra because whether we call it Śrīcakra or the personality of the Goddess, it is the same that is meant by both the terms.

In essence there is no difference whatsoever between the personality of the Goddess and the Śrīcakra which is in the form of a diagram or in a three-dimensional form. It would be clear to our readers that throughout this book the words Śrīvidyā or Śrīcakra have been used to denote the same object.

Therefore whether the personality occupies the centre of the city or Śrīcakra occupies it, it is same.

This identity is suggested in this mantra even though there is no explicit mention about it.

This mantra says that the Śrīcakra contains in the Bindu a thousand-petalled lotus. In the actual Śrīcakra the Bindu is seen clearly but the 1000 petalled lotus is to be imagined in the Bindu.

In the Sahasrāra centre the Bindu is to be supposed as well as the 1000 petalled lotus. As students of Śrīvidyā tradition, we are already familiar with the fact that the 1000 petalled lotus and the Bindu are identified. Therefore we may make sure from the statement of the Aruṇopaniṣat that the truth is again stressed here.

But this mantra contains an important fact that has not been revealed by the other texts. The new fact that is revealed here is that the 1000 petalled lotus is a treasure which is very precious and it is said to be a 'golden treasure'. The words 'golden treasure' mean that it is one of the finest treasures.

This treasure, according to this mantra, has a special brightness. We may question how the treasure is capable of this brightness.

In sections 11-13 we have had occasion to talk about the rays that are born out of the body of the Goddess. In those Sections it was pointed out that the 'body' has to be held to mean the 'two feet' of the Goddess.

As the Goddess occupies the centre of the city it is natural that the rays are shining from the centre. The rays are so powerful that they can reach any remote corner of the universe.

It is therefore no wonder that the rays of the Bindu or 1000 petalled lotus have reached the Svargaloka and the loka has become very bright by the powerful light of the rays.

The Puraṇas and other texts often say that there is a main difference between our world and the heaven. Of course there is light in this world also. But the light that passes through our world in only an ordinary light.

But the light that passes through the heaven is not a mere light; it has many extra-ordinary qualities and it is because of this the inhabitants of the heaven are able to live without death and live without taking any food. This is one difference.

Another difference is, that our world is bright only during the day - time. During night we are covered with darkness. But the heaven never experiences darkness at any point of time. It always, (days and nights), glitters with wonderful light. This wonderful light is supplied by the Bindu or the 1000 petalled lotus.

Section 20(A)

In Sections 18, 19 and 20 we have considered three mantras as if they were individual mantras. But in Section 20(A) we are going to consider the same mantra which is treated as one mantra by Bhaskararaya.

As an introduction, Bhaskararaya makes a very interesting remark.

He says:- 'In the Śaunaka Branch of the Atharva Veda the mantra is declared (as stated in the original

Sanskrit portion of this text). But the special feature between this and the Taittirīya School is that it has only the first two lines, whereas in the Atharva Veda it is found with four lines (including the first two lines found in the Taittirīya śākhā).

Commentators like Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara and Sāyaṇa have not noticed this variation in their commentaries on the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka. Bhāskararāya alone brings out this fact when he comments on Yoginī Hṛdaya (the later part of Vāmakeśvarī Tantra). This information is very interesting and worth studying by General Vedic scholars as well as Śrīvidyā followers.

Let us now consider the commentary of Bhāskara under this mantra.

He agrees with the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat that the words 'aṣṭā cakrā' denote the eight sub-cakra starting from Tralokya Mohana cakra to Sarva Siddhi Prada cakra which is the eighth cakra. The 'nine gates' mean the triangles of the Śrīcakra.

Bhāskara agrees with the other commentator in saying that 'āyodhyā' means 'beyond the reach of those who are less fortunate'.

He agrees with other aspects of the interpretations as found in the commentary of Aruṇopaniṣat.

In the opinion of Bhāskara, the Bindu is the unified form of the three sides of the central triangle.

After this, Bhāskara goes to interpret the second part of the mantra which is not found in the Taittirīya School.

Let us now consider the meaning of the second part as interpreted by Bhaskara.

According to him there is a very secret being within the Bindu and what it is can be understood only by the advanced aspirants and whom Bhaskara calls as 'knowers'.

The knowers can understand the hidden object as the Brahman. Even though Bhaskara has used the word Brahman here, we must understand that the word is common to mean both the Vedantic Brahman and the Supreme Goddess of Śrīvidya.

The city (of which we have spoken enough in the earlier Sections) is named as Aparajita. In fact we will be required to deal with this word when we come to Section 22.

The city is qualified by the adjectives like 'shining'.

Every Śrīvidya worshipper should understand that his goal of life is to reach this city. The main reason for this aspiration is to attain a level from which there is no slip for the worshipper.

That is why Bhaskara says: 'Those who reach the city never come back to this world by taking a birth'. This means that it is similar to Mokṣa which also has the same quality.

As soon as Bhaskara mentions the word 'aparajita' he is naturally led to remember the occurrence of the word in the Brahmasūtra bhaṣya of Śrī Śankara.

Śrī Śankara makes a clear mention of the word in his Brahma Sūtra commentary once under the Sūtra 4.3.14 and the other under the Sūtra 4.4.22.

Śankara under 4.3.14 quotes the Chandogya Upaniṣadic passage 8,5,3 which says: 'There is the city of Brahman Aparajita and the golden hall built by Prabhu'.

Under the Sūtra 4.4.22, Śankara again makes a mention of the word.

'Those who, in following the road of gods, to which the vien and the ray are leading, and on which light is the first stage, reach the world of Brahman as described by scripture—where 'there are two lakes Ara and Ṇya in the world of Brahman, in the third heaven from hence' and where 'there is a lake Airammadīya and Aśvattha tree showering down Soma and the city of Brahman Aparajita and the golden hall built by Prabhu' (Cha. Up. 8,5,3)...

'Those, we say, who reach that world do not return from there after having finished the enjoyment of their deeds...Why so? Because scriptural passages teach that they do not so return...

'It is a settled matter that those who have perfect knowledge have dispelled all mental darkness and are devoted to the externally perfect Nirvaṇa do not return. And as those also who rely on the knowledge of the qualified Brahman in the end have recourse to that (Nirvaṇa), it follows that they also do not return'.

The above mentioned writing of Śankara would naturally make us think that what is suggested in the

Aruṇopaniṣat passage may have relationship with what Śankara observes in his Bhaṣya.

Bhaskara categorically says that the Śrīcakra is different from this as referred to by Śrī Śankara.

Why should Bhaskara hasten to add this remark against the observations of Śankara will be made clear in some other work planned by this present author.

Bhaskara agrees with the statement of many Śrīvidya authorities that the Bindu is a union of the three sides of the Central triangle which in its turn is a union of all the other triangles, petals and other lines of the Śrīcakra. This means that the Śrīcakra is the real expansion of the Bindu.

NOTE:— In the English translation (P. 35) the name of the first lake is printed as 'Amara'. This should actually read as 'Ara'.

Section 21

In the opinion of the commentator, this mantra mentions about the fruits associated with the worship of Śrīcakra.

But in the general Vedic tradition this mantra, as a mantra of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka, is used by a benedictory mantra by the priests who conduct the household ceremonies in the Hindu homes. Therefore in the Śrīvidya as well as in the general Vedic tradition this is a mantra, the proper recitation of which, is useful to bless the devotees.

The commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat explains the various words of the mantra as follows:--

The commentator in this connection makes an important observation with reference to the words 'yo veda'.

It has been repeatedly pointed out that the Hindu rituals, whatever they may be and in whichever context they are used, are meant primarily to purify the mind of the human beings. Although for a superfical reading the rituals appear to be dry and mechanical rituals, they are actually designed to act very deeply and powerfully to modify the psychic plane of the individuals. The worshipper may not understand the effect of the rituals in his own inner being but the effect is certainly there.

It is a general rule regarding the rituals that the performer of the rituals should not try to do them in a mechanical way. While the person engages himself in the performance of the rituals, he must concentrate in his mind the purpose for which the rituals are meant and the proper mood in which the rituals should be done.

In order to do this the worshipper should know at least the literal meaning. The worshipper should slowly try to understand the inner meaning and purpose of the rituals.

That is why the commentator says that he who worships the Śrīcakra ritually should have a prior knowledge of the meaning and purpose of the rituals. While the worshipper learns the rituals of Śrīvidya, he must also learn deeply the meaning and purpose of the rituals. While doing the rituals he must create in his own mind a proper mood which is required at that time.

The previous mantra has already informed us that there is a city of Brahman or the Goddess which is enveloped by ambrosia of the Candra maṇḍala. It was also informed that the rays of Bindu brighten the entire worlds including the heaven.

Therefore the Śrīvidya tradition wants every worshipper to be a good scholar of the Śrīvidya tradition. This is a very significant point to be noted by all the worshippers of Śrīvidya.

The mantra uses two words to refer to the God. In the general tradition the word 'Brahman' which is a nueter gender word, usually denotes the Supreme Brahman which is beyond all genders and descriptions.

The word 'Brahma' is a masculine gender word and normally denotes the qualified Brahman.

But following the Śrīvidya tradition the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat interprets that the word 'Brahman' denotes the supreme Goddess and the word 'Brahma' denotes the supreme God in the masculine gender.

The commentator finds a clue in the usage of the word 'ca' two times. According to him the 'ca-s' denote the union of Śiva and Śakti in the head-centre.

In this context the commentator describes the city of Goddess which we have already described in some what detailed manner.

The mantra is a prayer for the grant of fame and progeny.

The commentator explains that the Vedic language is peculiar and so it would not bind itself to the man-made grammatical rules.

Section 22

According to the introductory remarks of the commentator to this Section, this mantra explains how Śiva and Śaktī live in the Bindu.

Those who read this mantra would naturally remember the Śrīsūkta found in the Ṛgveda. Śrīsūkta is a very popular hymn of the Ṛgveda and it is constantly recited in most of the Hindu homes. It is in that hymn the Goddess is described as of golden colour and of golden form. This mantra of this Upaniṣat borrowing those famous words from the Ṛgveda repeats them here.

We have already explained that in the concept of the Goddess the 'rays' play an important role.

We have also explained earlier that the concept of 'fame' also plays a significant role in the description of the Devī.

We have also pointed out in early contexts that the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat is fond of repeating certain ideas throughout his commentary.

In the Rudrayāmala verse (5) it is said that any person who is either famous or wealthy, should have been a Śrīvidya worshipper in his present or previous birth or births.

It is the settled notion of the Śrīvidya tradition that unless the person has obtained the grace of the Goddess, he can neither be famous nor can he be prosperous.

This idea is very much liked by the commentator and so he adds this remark very often in more than one place in his commentary.

The Śrīvidya tradition firmly believes that the original owner of all prosperity is the Goddess and she alone can bestow the prosperity on any person. Other gods, if at all they are allowed to give this to others, it is only after getting the permission from the Devī.

There is a proverb in Sanskrit which runs as follows:-

नहि भिक्षुक:भिक्षुकान्तरं याचति ।

This means that no begger would really want to beg from another begger. If we beg from another begger we may get only a limited share as the other begger has to get it from somebody.

Śrī Bhaskararaya has composed an excellent prayer entitled Paraśivastava which is not available to us in full. A few verses from this work quoted in some texts are preserved for us.

In one of the verses he says that all the Gods including Paramaśiva have borrowed from the Goddess and therefore they are themselves beggers. If at all one should beg, one should directly beg from the Goddess who alone is the original owner all prosperities.

This glorious Goddess lives in the city which is made of gold. That is why the city is termed as 'Puram hiraṇmayīm'.

In the same city Sadaśiva also lives. Even though both of them are said to live in this city which is nothing but the Bindu centre, there is something which we should know in this connection.

The mantra quoted in Section 22, therefore makes this special feature clear.

Before we go to consider this point we may have to listen to the commentator as to what he wants to say about the word 'brahma' which occurs in this mantra.

As we already know, in the previous mantra also the word occured and in that context the commentator wanted to explain it as meaning 'Brahma who is identifiable with Brahman, the masculine Brahman'.

While reading this interpretation in that context we would have wondered on what authority the commentator has offered this interpretation.

In this context the commentator quotes his authority for that interpretation.

In the Mahanarayana Upaniṣat (21.2) there is a mantra which reads as follows:—

ब्रह्मा शिवो मे अस्तु सदाशिवोम् ।

Normal Upaniṣadic translators have translated this mantra as 'I am Sadaśiva described thus and denoted by Praṇava'. According to one translator 'the expression sadaśivom' stands for Sadaśivaḥ om'.

But the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat having studied the Upaniṣat in a more authoritative way thinks that the idea which is conveyed is: 'Let Brahmạ who is identifiable with Sadạśiva be ever auspicious to us' and therefore the commentator thinks that they are the same personalities.

On this authority he interprets this word as meaning 'Sadạsiva' in the previous as well as in this mantra.

The commentator takes this much pain to interpret the word in this way to bring in the idea that Sadạśiva permanently lives in the city of gold whether we locate the golden city in the external universe or in the Bindu centre of the Sahasrạra.

Even in the Śrīcakra pūjạ when the worshipper invokes the Goddess on the Bindu he takes her out from his own body and requests her to enter into the Bindu. But Sadạśiva is already there in the Bindu and therefore he is not invoked along with the Goddess.

A word of explanation is essential here to clarify some doubts which our readers are likely to develop after reading the above paragraphs.

We have already explained that there are six spiritual centres along the course of the spinal chord and a power called Kuṇḍalinī is sleeping in the bottom-most centre known as Mūlạdharạ. The Kuṇḍalinī is none else than the Goddess. Therefore for some practical reasons we must assume that the Goddess lives in the Mūlạdhạra whereas Sadạśiva lives in the Bindu.

When we disturb the Kuṇḍalinī, she gets up from sleep and starts moving upwards through the other spiritual centres like Svādhiṣṭhāna, Maṇīpūraka etc. Finally depending upon our depth of effort, she reaches the Bindu and enjoys the union of Sadāśiva in the Bindu.

But we must make more efforts to retain the Kuṇḍalinī in the Bindu itself. If we fail to put in the required effort to retain her in Bindu, there is a tendency for Kuṇḍalinī to move downwards in order to come back to the Mūlādhāra centre to continue her sleep in the Mūlādhāra because of her habit acquired in many of our previous births.

If she comes down we must again make efforts to see that she moves up again. This effort we must continue for sometime till we succeed in retaining her in the Bindu.

Every time she temporarily is in the Bindu centre we must immediately try to inflame the Agni of the Svādhiṣṭhāna centre as described in Section 16 and 16(A). By our spiritual efforts we must retain her permanently in the Bindu.

Although spiritually Sadāśiva and the Goddess are ever living in the Bindu, from the practical point of view we must understand that she enters into the Bindu several times whereas Sadāśiva is always there.

That is why it was remarked by the commentator that there is difference in the manner of entry into the Bindu by both Sadāśiva and Śakti.

Section 23

In Section 9 we had occasion to point out that the central theme of Śrīvidyā known as the Goddess supreme was directly described in some words.

Similarly in this Section also the Devī is described in two words. The words are 'ajyāmayī' and 'anāśakī'. Of these two words the word anāśakī is very simple to understand. It means 'The Goddess who is beyond destruction'.

The word ajyāmayī is not so simple to understand. According to the commentator, this word also means a very similar idea and therefore the commentator first offers the meaning 'with out destruction, Permanent, bereft of suffering and full of bliss'.

The Commentator gives another explanation in which he wants to split the word 'अ+ज्या'. The commentator says that ज्या means 'earth' and by earth all the five elements (bhūtas) are represented. So the word indicates all the five bhūtas like earth, water, fire, wind and space. The word 'अ' means that she is opposite of ज्या which means the five elements.

This finally results in meaning that she is neither earth, nor water, nor fire, nor wind and nor space. Then who is she?

The Commentator says she is 'manas' etc. By this the commentator indicates that she is beyond these bhūtas.

Having explained the words like this, the commentator comes to explain the word पराङ् which is used twice in the mantra.

While explaining the word पराङ् the commentator draws our attention to the Śrīcakra and its triangles. Therefore it becomes our duty here to explain the angles of the Śrīcakra in order to make our readers understand the commentary under the Section 23.

Śrīcakra is a very popular cakra and most of our readers would have some knowledge about the cakra especially the sub-cakras which constitute the Śrīcakra. The Aruṇopaniṣat has no inclination to give us a detailed description of the Śrīcakra.

The physical appearance of the Śrīcakra seems to have undergone many developments in the course of many centuries. Still it is clear that by the time of the famous text Saundarya Lahari which is popularly believed to be from the pen of Śrī Śankara the Śrīcakra attained the present form.

In this exposition we have no scheme to go into the problems of the development of Śrīcakra or into the authorship problem of Saundarya Laharī.

In the Saundarya Laharī the author describes directly about the Śrīcakra in verse eleven. The verse runs as follows:-

चतुर्भिः श्रीकण्ठैः शिवयुवतिभिः पञ्चभिरपि
प्रभिन्नाभिः शंभोर्नवभिरपि मूलप्रकृतिभिः ।
चतुश्चत्वारिंशद् वसुदल कलाश्र त्रिवलय–
त्रिरेखाभिः सार्धं तव चरणकोणाः परिणताः ॥

The meaning is as follows :-

The angles of thy abode (i.e. Śrīcakra) which is made up of the nine mūlaprakṛtis or basic triangles (the nine primary causative forces of the universe) consisting of the four distinct Śiva triangles (with apex upwards), and the five distinct Śakti triangles (with apex downwards) kept apart from the former by the Bindu, with the eight-petalled lotus, the lotus of sixteen petals with the three circles around and the three lines, are counted as 43 (or 44).

Although the Aruṇopaniṣat and its commentator are more interested in the inner worship or the mental worship, they are making a suggestive mention of the external Śrīcakra in this mantra. Such a mention is made in order to facilitate the understanding of the details of the inner components of the Śrīcakra.

Now a days the Śrīcakra is available ready-made carved on some kind of metal-plates. Therefore most of the modern devotees have no necessity to practise the art of drawing the cakra by themselves.

In those days the worshipper of Śrīcakra used to draw the diagram daily or whenever he sits to perform the cakra pūja. It was mostly drawn on sandal paste, Kumkum (Vermilion), tumeric powder, bark of a tree called Bhūrja, silk or some other smooth surface. The drawing of the cakra involves many complications but in those days many devotees were adepts in the art of drawing it quickly and perfectly.

As described above in the Saundarya Laharī verse, the cakra consists of triangles, circles or squares and of

petals. In this context we are not immediately concerned with the circles and other aspects. Our concern in this context is on the triangles which are 43 (or 44) in number.

Those who have observed closely the cakra, would have noticed that, of the 43 triangles some are with their apex downwards and some are with their apex upwards.

In the most popular Śrīcakra that is seen in most of the houses or places of worship, we will see a bindu in the middle of the central triangle. In this diagram, the central triangle would have its apex facing downwards. Similarly some of the other triangles would have the same position while some other triangles would have their apex upwards.

Four such sets of triangles with apex upwards are called Śiva triangles and five sets of triangles with apex downwards are called Śakti triangles.

According to the commentator this is what is meant by the word 'पराङ्' found in the Aruṇopaniṣat mantra.

That is why he interprets the word 'पराङ्' as meaning 'the Goddess who is in the form of the triangular cakras with their apex downwards'.

At the same time if we turn the diagram upside down then the downward and upward position of the triangles would be different.

In this position the top would become the bottom and the bottom would become the top and in this the upward apex would become downward and the downward apex would become upward.

Let us try to explain the intention of the commentator in saying all these remarks.

Usually the triangles with downward apexes are called Śakti triangles and the triangles with upward apexes are called Śiva triangles. But if we change the diagram top as bottom and bottom as top, then what were Śakti triangles would now become Śiva triangles as they now face downwards.

What the commentator wants to convey is that there is no hard and fast distinction between the Śakti triangles and those of the Śiva triangles.

In fact all the 43 (or 44) triangles actually belong to Śakti, because the Śrīcakra is essentially a cakra of the Supreme Goddess.

There may be customary division between Śakti and Śiva for some practical purposes but in reality there is no actual distinction between these two.

The Devī is female and at the same time she is the male also. The famous Kulārṇava Tantra echoes the same idea:—

पुंरूपं वा स्मरेद्देवीं स्त्रीरूपं वा विचिन्तयेत् ।

The meaning is: 'One can meditate on Devī as a male or as a female'.

Section 24

In Section 21 the commentator remarked in his introduction to that Section, that in that Section the fruit resulting from the worship of Śrīcakra is mentioned.

In this Section too the commentator mentions that the fruit obtainable by the knowers of Śrīvidyā tradition is explained.

In short, in Section 21 long life, fame and good progeny were mentioned as the fruits resulting from the worship of Śrīcakra. But in this Section some more significant results are mentioned.

Before we consider those points, it is necessary to notice the interpretation offered by the commentator for the two words 'देवा:' and 'असुरा:'.

In the popular understanding of these words, devāḥ means the gods in general and asurāḥ means the demons in general. But the commentator is inclined to give them a peculiar meaning which is rare.

We may fully agree with the commentator when he says that the word devāḥ is derived from the root 'div' to shine. This meaning is very commonly accepted by all Sanskrit authorities.

But the commentator interprets the word असुरा: as meaning 'the eleven sense organs' which all of us are possessing.

Perhaps the commentator thinks that even though we have a human body which is basically an inanimate substance, we are able to make use of our intellectual capabilities only through the sense organs like eyes, ears etc., which alone make us conscious beings. Here he means all the sense organs through which we 'understand' the external and internal worlds.

The commentator then says that 'asavaḥ' means the five vital airs like Prāṇa etc. After giving this explanation he says that by this term the five 'tanmātras' are meant. In Indian Philosophy subtle and primary elements such as शब्द, स्पर्श, रूप, रस and गन्ध — are recognised as Tatvas. In Śrīvidyā tradition too these elements are recognised as 27th to 31st Tatvas.

If we ask the question as to why the Tanmātras are referred to here, the commentator would say that these are the primary elements out of which Prāṇa and other vital airs have come out.

Again, it is because of these vital airs we become animate objects as opposed to inanimates.

In this context it becomes necessary for us to point out an important fact.

For a theoretical student of philosophy the chapter on the Tatvas may appear to be a mere enumeration of the Tatvas one by one for the sake of knowing them for academic purposes.

But, for a student of spirituality the Tatvas are not for mere enumerations. The spiritual student, according to Śrīvidyā tradition, will have to meditate on each of the Tatvas in order to establish a deep contact with each of them. A complete knowledge of the Tatva will lead him to its immediate higher Tatva and thus the student will move slowly with each of the Tatvas higher and higher.

The student will first identify himself with the lowest Tatva called the Pṛthvī tatva. Once he attains mastery over it he will be automatically taken to the next higher tatva called 'ap' or water tatva. Thus the

student will rise upto the level of Jīva tatva which is occupying the 25th position in the list of Tatras (enumerated from Pṛthvī tatva).

Upto this 25th tatva, it is known as the evalutes of the immediately next higher tatva. The 25th tatva, Jīva, is considered, in the Śrīvidya tradition, as the substratum of Niyatī, Kala, Raga, Kala and Vidya.

Therefore a worshipper who deeply meditates on these tatvas and who has come up to the level of the Jīva, the 25th Tatva, is in a position to realize directly and immediately that all the tatvas, beyond the level of the 25th tatva, as the union of Śiva and Śakti.

Once the worshipper generates in himself this knowledge he becomes a real 'scholar' in the spiritual sense of the word.

We are in a position, now, to realize that upto the 25th tatva they are evalutes and above them is the graded level of the union of Śiva and Śakti. The lowest level of this union is represented by the Vidya tatva whereas the highest level of tatva is represented by the actual union of the Supreme Brahman and the Goddess.

It must be understood in this way, that the tatvas are not merely to know the order of the tatvas but each is a helping step for spiritual evolution of the student.

Beyond the avidya tatva every tatva becomes very subtle and therefore the commentator interprets the word उभयान् as representing Maya to Sadasiva.

In this connection another remark of the commentator is worth noticing.

We have already mentioned in a previous Section that there are numerous worship manuals in Śrīvidya tradition. Each one of the worship manuals is designed for a particular level of student.

A student who starts his worship at a particular level has to try his best to go upward to the next higher level of pūja. The secret of the path that leads the student from the lower path to the higher path will have to be learnt from the competent teacher.

One may ask as to why the student should try to uplift himself by such methods.

The Commentator says that the student's status and level are determined by the status and level which he creates for himself by adopting a particular pūja.

Supposing that a student undertakes a particular level of pūja and continues to remain in the same level till he dies, he will go to that level of Mokṣa corresponding to the level of the pūja done by him in this world.

From this remark we may understand that there are gradations with reference to each type of pūja. Similarly there are gradations with reference to the Mokṣa also. The gradation with regard to the Mokṣa is not a peculiar concept of Śrīvidya tradition.

This type of gradation is found in all schools of Indian spirituality and they are recognised by great commentators like Rāmānuja, Śankara and others.

The lowest level of Mukti or Mokṣa is named as Sarṣṭi. The next higher Mukti is called Saloka. The third level is Samīpya. The fourth level is Sarūpya and the final Mokṣa is Sayujya.

The Commentator of Saundarya Laharī explains all these levels of Mukti in his commentary under verse No. 99 Those who are interested in more details on these may consult the commentary referred to above.

The commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat tries to warn all the devotees that they should try to choose the correct type of pūja which is suitable to them to start with and then they should try to go slowly beyond that. If they do, they may directly go to the highest Mokṣa, Sayuja. Otherwise they may go either to Sarṣṭī or one or two steps above Sarṣṭi level and should again continue to do Sadhana even after they have gone to Mokṣa. Therefore in this world itself they should try to uplift themself to avoid any future complications.

Section 25

In the previous Section we have explained on the basis of the commentary that all worshippers should try to reach a higher level in spirituality so that after leaving this world the worshipper can directly reach the highest form of Mokṣa. This is what the mantra says when it wants us to know both the devas and the asuras. According to the previous mantra a person becomes a 'scholar' only when he knows deeply the devas and the asuras. Even though the commentator has not explicitly informed us whom or what he means by the devas and what or whom he means by the asuras, we may safely conclude that her intends the

devas to be the tatvas upto 25 and the asuras to be the tatvas 26 to 36. That is why he explains devas as representing the sense organs and asuras as representing the tanmatras (including Maya to Sadasiva).

In his introduction to the 25th Section the commentator says: Now the means to learn both the Devas and the Asuras are explained.

At the end of the Section 25 he concludes by saying: By this the worshipper can easily understand that the Supreme Goddess is beyond the 25th tatva.

In the opinion of the commentator, the 25th Section deals with a means to teach us the technique of knowing the devas and the asuras.

At the end of the 25th Section the commentator gives us the instruction (to know both the devas and the asuras) as follows:

Therefore the worshipper should try to kindle the Agni (of the Svadhiṣṭhana centre) by repeated practice of breath control. He must try to melt the Candra-maṇḍala by the flames of the Agni. Then he must try to experience the flow of ambrosia oozing out from the Candra maṇḍala of the Bindu.

We have already seen in Section 16 and 16(A) the Upaniṣadic mantra giving us in clear terms the instructions to inflame the Agni of the Svadhiṣṭhana centre and enjoy the ambrosial flow of the Sahasrara centre.

What was explained is again repeated by the commentator in the Section 25. The repetition is necessary because the instruction is secret and the practice is highly complicated

In order to practise what was instructed in Section 16 and 16(A) it is necessary to know some important nature of the Kuṇḍalinī which is going to be the instrument of our effort to make the ambrosial flow.

There are three stages in the evolution of Kuṇḍalinī power. The first stage is called Kumarī. The second stage is called Yoṣit and the third stage is called Pativṛata.

The mantra calls the Kuṇḍalinī as Kumarī in her initial stage. Let us know why she is called Kumarī at this stage.

We all know that the kuṇḍalinī is sleeping in the Mūladhara like a coiled snake. When we begin our spiritual efforts, the Kuṇḍalinī power is disturbed. The Kuṇḍalinī has been enjoying a sound sleep for many number of years in many births and so she is very reluctant to come out of sleep. Still as she is disturbed again and again by our efforts to wake her up, she tries to leave off her laziness by making a low sound which exactly resembles the sound of a snake when the serpent wants to get up.

The low voiced sound resembles like the crying of a baby. As crying is associated with this first stage of the Kuṇḍalinī it is called the Kumarī stage.

After waking up from the long sleep the Kuṇḍalinī power becomes active and tries to move to the next centre called Svadhiṣṭhana. From this centre she goes further up

and comes to the level of the Anahata centre. From the Anahata centre she tries to go further up but her upward movement beyond the Anahata centre is blocked by a spiritual knot which is found just above the Anahata centre. Unless the knot which is called 'Viṣṇu-knot' is loosened or unknotted she cannot go up. In order to break the Viṣṇu-knot (granthi) the Kuṇḍalinī again makes a sound.

This is made clear by the Sanatkumara Samhita and the translation of the relevant passage is given on page 40 of this book.

The Kuṇḍalinī which was like a 'kumarī' (a young girl) in the beginning, has now, at this stage, become a bit grown up girl and so she is now called yoṣit.

After breaking the Viṣṇu-knot Kuṇḍalinī continues to go up and when she reaches the Sahasrara centre she becomes like a fully grown girl fit for enjoying the union of a male.

She reaching the Bindu centre unites herself with the Brahman (Sadaśiva) who is already present at the Bindu permanently. In her spiritual sport with Sadaśiva she generates profuse ambrosial liquid and the liquid is ready to flow into the 72000 naḍis.

While on one side the worshipper is to wake up the Kuṇḍalinī from the Mūladhara and make her go up from one centre to the other higher centre, the worshipper is to simultaneously inflame the fire of the Svadhiṣṭhana centre and make it reach as high as the Sahasrara centre in order to melt the Bindu.

The reaching of Kuṇḍalinī to the Bindu centre and her union with the Supreme Brahman coinciding with the flames of the Svādhiṣṭhāna fire would generate profuse ambrosial water for flowing into the 72000 nāḍis of the body of the worshipper.

Section 25(A)

Bhāskararāya who has written some explanatory notes on this mantra agrees fully with the elucidation made by the commentator of the Aruṇopaniṣat. Still there are some additional interesting remarks in the explanatory notes on this mantra by Bhāskara. We will consider those additional remarks here in this Section.

The word kumārī is first identified by Bhāskara with the Pṛthvī tatva and he explains that 'Ku' (Pṛthvī tatva) is dissolved (mriyate) at the Mūlādhāra centre and so it is called ku + māra (= where the pṛthvī tatva is dissolved). Then the word is associated with its female aspect which is called ku+mārī = kumārī. This kumārī is nothing but the kuṇḍalinī. As she is associated with the Mūlādhāra which is called kulakuṇḍa she is called kulakuṇḍalinī.

The word 'mandrayate' means a low sound. This is associated with the crying of the kuṇḍalinī which is reluctant to get up and so she cries.

At the second stage, the kumārī is called Taruṇī because at this stage, according to Bhāskara, she is united with the Sun who is also called Taruṇa. As she is associated with Taruṇa she is called Taruṇī. It may be remembered that in Section 25 the commentator explained that she is yoṣit because she is now a bit-grown up (Taruṇī) girl.

In the general Sanskrit tradition the word Pativrata is taken to mean a chaste lady who lives physically and mentally with only one male person.

But Bhaskara splits the word into two words Pati+ Vrata. He takes the word 'Vrata' to mean 'one who enjoys' on the authority of the Vedic text which says 'Payo vratam brahmaṇasya' which means the brahmin-who vows to live with the milk only'.

As she (kuṇḍalinī) is purified by her union with the spiritual person (Kumara) of the Mūladhara centre and with the spiritual person (Taruṇa) of the Anahata centre, she is called 'auspecious'.

This mantra says that as the liquidization of the Candra Maṇḍala becomes possible only by the flames of the fire, we must recognise the importance of the Svadhiṣṭhana centre and the act of inflaming the Agni to make it reach the level of Sahasrara centre.

From the quotation cited by Bhaskara (on page 42) from the Sanatkumara Tantra we may understand that this Tantra repeats the mantras of the Aruṇopaniṣat.

Having quoted the mantra from the Sanatkumara text, Bhaskara quotes a passage from the Taittirīya Brahmaṇa which is reproduced and translated on P. 42.

The T.B. passage has been translated on P.42. with full explanation and so it need not be again explained here. (T.B. means Taittirīya Brahmaṇa.)

Having explained the T.B. mantra, Bhaskara gives the inner meaning of the T.B. passage. Let the kuṇḍalinī

which comes from the abodes of Agni and other (centres) shower the ambrosia (from the Sahasrāra centre) and make us fully satisfied.

This shows that the Aruṇopaniṣat mantra which is given in Section 16 is an echo of Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa text (quoted on P 42 of this book).

Bhāskara also quotes from Śukasamhitā and refers to Vasiṣṭha and other texts in which the Aruṇopaniṣat mantras are repeated in some form or other.

All these texts prove that the Aruṇopaniṣat was excercising its wonderful influence on many old and new texts.

The grammatical notes given by Bhāskara under this Section have been explained on P.43 and so they need not be repeated here.

Section 26

In our exposition we have very often remarked in many places that, of all the aspects of Hinduism Śrīvidyā is the only religion which fully and deeply is qualified to be called universal in approach. While we explained the word 'Bhāratāḥ', we very often remarked that the word means all human beings without any exception. The Section 26 gives further proof to claim the same idea in a more emphatic manner.

In India especially in Hinduism there is a major set-back by recognising officially the division of Hindus as 'śudras' and 'the untouchables'. Many competent scholars and writers from all over the world, have tried

to trace the origin and development of the Śūdras and the untouchables. Many social theories have come up to explain these factors.

In the modern world, especially in the changing social conditions the idea of Śūdra and the untouchables is heartrending in a very deep manner. Many modern great personalities have tried to eradicate the Sūdrahood and the untouchability.

In fact in ancient and middle ages also several attempts have been made to wipe off this shame-bringing concept. During the 11th century Śrī Ramanuja tried to bring about a social revolution by accommodating the Sūdras and the untouchables. Even before Śrī Rāmānuja, Śrī Śankara sang the Maṇīṣā pañcakam to redicule the shameful idea. Still the concept of Śūdras and untouchables remained as before.

In the Śrīvidyā tradition, we have explained in Section 16 and 16 (A), that the call of the Upainṣads, especially the Aruṇopaniṣat, induced the orthodox Hindus to leave off their parochial ideas and come out to recognise more flexible social ideas so that the social evils can be eradicated socially and methodically.

Even the early efforts of the Śaiva Nāyanmars (the ardent Śaiva devotees of Tamil Nadu), the Ālvārs (the ardent Vaiṣṇava devotees of Tamil Nadu) and the Vīra Śaiva saints proved futile in the course of time. The ignorant and the orthodox people never felt for their misakes in not accommodating the Śūdras and the untouchables.

As we have pointed out in the introduction to this book, we are yet to fix the identity of the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat even though many points lead us to identify

him with Lakṣmīdhara, the famous commentator of Saundarya Laharī and other texts.

The commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat seems to belong to the 14th or 15th century A.D. During this century the caste-consciousness of the Hindus must have been certainly at its height. Perhaps many scholars, even though they in their inner mind recognised the folly of caste-consciousness, could not and did not condemn it fearing the onslaught by the ignorant people of that age.

In such an age the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat makes some remarks in Section 26 and these remarks deserve our full attention with great respect to the commentator.

While interpreting the word 'yajvanaḥ' he says: Those who are qualified to perform the Vedic sacrifices (and this refers to the) three higher castes and Āśramites.

While interpreting the word 'ayajvanaḥ' he says: Those who are not eligible to perform the Vedic sacrifices and (this refers to the) ŚUDRAS and the (SO-CALLED) LOWER CASTES.

Thus in the opinion of the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat, the word ayajvanaḥ denotes the Śūdras and the other low-caste people.

While Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara and Sāyana, who commented on these words never brought out the idea of Śūdras and the untouchables in this context, the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat was very bold to say that the word ayajvanaḥ denotes the 'Śūdras and others'.

Having interpreted the word like this, the commentator quotes a Vedic passage from the Taittirīya Samhitā.

This statement (T.S. 7.1.1) clearly says that 'the Śūdra is not fit to undertake to perform the sacrifice'. (T.S. means Taittirīya Samhitā).

On the basis of this T.S. statement, later scholars began to exclude the Śūdras (and others) from the performance of sacrifices. Many people, including the scholars, thought that the Veda has excluded them and so they cannot be allowed in any orthodox performances.

The commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat, perhaps, was the only bold person to make a revolutionary interpretation for this mistaken T.S. statement quoted above.

The commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat says that the interpretation held by many scholars is utterly wrong.

According to him the statement 'the Śūdras are unfit for sacrifices' means that the three higher caste people alone are more fit for performing the Vedic sacrifices like Agniṣṭoma.

In other words, the word 'yajña' in the T.S. is used in a purely restricted sense to include only the Vedic sacrifices like Agniṣṭoma.

This word 'yajña' would never include pūjas and activities prescribed by the Śrīvidyā tradition. The Śrīvidyā tradition together with its other prescriptions are fully open for the Śūdras and the other so-called low class people.

This is a wonderfully revolutionary idea especially in the 14th or 15th century.

Having voiced a revolutionary idea in the above mentioned way, the commentator comes forward to express another revolutionary idea immediately.

There is a 'nyāya' in Sanskrit tradition. Nyāya means an accepted religious and common judgement decided by the unquestionable authorities after long and deep consultation, discussion and consideration.

In the world of interpretation of tradition, the Mīmāmsakas hold a high position. They have given to Indian Language and religious world many judgements to be followed without any hesitation.

One such judgement which is in the form a dictum is 'Niṣāda sthapati nyāya.' On the basis of the Mīmāmsaka authorities, the nyāya is explained in many modern Sanskrit dictionaries and guides.

Still the central idea of this dictum has not been explained plainly in most of these books.

Niṣāda is a tribe which is considered to be a low-class group. There is a leader of the tribe who wants to perform a Vedic sacrifice. The question now is whether the leader of the tribe is allowed to perform the Vedic sacrifice.

The authorities, after due consideration of many authoritative texts and tradition, have decided finally that he is qualified to perform Vedic sacrifice. This proves that in spite of the T.S. statement quoted above, the Śūdras and low-caste people can perform Vedic sacrifices.

If they are allowed to perform Vedic sacrifices, why not they be allowed to perform Śrīcakra pūja?

Therefore, the commentator categorically concludes that all caste-people, and āśramites, and all knowers and unknowers are qualified to perform Śrīcakra worship.

Such a statement may be an ordinary statement in the modern days but it would have created a tension and turmoil in the days of the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat.

Unmindful of, and indifferent to all such oppositions and criticisms the commentator has boldly come out to voice his rightful thinking in his commentary on the Aruṇopaniṣat.

It is certain that he did not conceive this most revolutionary idea by himself. It must have been an accepted idea with the followers of Śrīvidya of his time. The commentator therefore comes forward to express it under the mantra in this Section.

Having voiced a socially very relevant idea like this the commentator now expresses another important idea at the end of Section 26.

It is an accepted fact in Śrīvidya tradition that the tradition never tries to disregard the material world as false or the living in this world is meaningless.

In the Śrīvidya tradition, as we have already explained, the world is a reality and therefore we must have a prosperous and contended life in this world That is why the Śrīvidya pūja allows the worshipper to obtain all worldly pleasures and enjoyments. The pūja would automatically bring in all prosperities to the devotees of Śrīvidya.

The greatest prosperity one can think of is the heaven in which every aspect of living is pleasure and nothing but pleasure.

But the heaven is, in fact, not the final goal of Śrīvidya worshippers. They are in fact recommended to work for the Mokṣa to reach one of the aspects of Mokṣa, Sarṣṭi, Saloka etc.

Those who have not yet become fully ripe may aspire for heaven which is full of divine pleasure of all types. But a real knower of Śrīvidya tradition never cares for mere heaven. He aspires only for the Mokṣa which is the final goal in all Indian spiritual tradition. Śrīvidya is no exception to this general rule.

Section 27

After having dealt with many most important aspects of Śrīvidya tradition the Aruṇopaniṣat now comes to deal with another significant aspect of Śrīvidya.

In this connection it must be pointed out that the Hinduism is normally misunderstood as a worship of many gods. From a superficial view, this idea may appear to be a right view. Many Hindus, even today, have not understood the truth about the worship of many gods.

From the time of the Ṛgveda, which is the earliest of the Vedas, the worship of many gods is prevalent in Hinduism. The number of gods, after the time of Ṛgveda, started varying, some gods disappearing and some gods appearing newly from time to time.

In the later age where Hinduism got itself involved in recognising some of the gods like Śiva, Viṣṇu, Gaṇapati and others as Supreme gods, sectarian religions, like Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism, Gaṇapatyam etc., came into being. Sometimes

in the name of these gods clashes and quarrels ensued among the devotees of these gods.

Even today the Hindus are engaged in the worship of many gods. Even the Vedic gods like Indra, Varuṇa and others have not disappered from the sphere completely.

What is the authoritative view of this kind of multi-gods worship in Hinduism?

In this context, it must be pointed out, that even in Śrīvidya, recommendation is given to worship many gods. The Śrīcakra pūja witnesses not only the worship of many attendant deities of the Goddess, but also the worship of Mahāgaṇapati, Viṣṇu etc.

Therefore what is the official view of the Śrīvidya texts with reference to the worship of many gods?

The mantra of this Section comes forward to answer this question.

Śrīvidya worship is not against the worship of many gods. In fact the Śrīvidya devotee can worship any god like Indra, Agni and others. He may even worship gods like Yama who are now relegated as 'direction-protectors'.

Some Śrīvidya worshippers may even meditate on the tatvas like Pṛthvī.

Śrīvidya never discourages the worship of such gods and principles. But the Śrīvidya devotee should try to understand the real position about these gods.

We have already explained that the gods like Indra and Maruts have become prosperous by worshipping the Goddess. All their wealth are due to the grace of the Goddess. Any power they wield is due to the grace of the Goddess.

If Śrīcakra or Śrīvidya has not blessed them, they can never become prosperous and powerful.

What does this mean?

The Śrīvidya wants us to know the fact that the Goddess is the only Supreme Being. She is beyond the reach of the senses and mind of all people including the great sages.

It is for our sake she assumes a form with a face or faces and with a physical body. She has come with a pair of lotus feet to sanction to all of us what cannot be given by any other god or gods.

She is adored by the chiefs of the gods and the asuras. She is the only indweller of all the Beings. She pervades every object. She is the cause of creation, maintenance and dissolution.

She has thousands of names as found in Lalita Sahasranama. But her real name is Śrīvidya or Śrīcakra.

All other gods, therefore, should be worshipped as part of her universal being. Indra may be worshipped not as Indra but as an aspect of her. Otherwise we will be subjected to fall down like the sand particles.

Therefore let us worship all gods as part of the Goddess or let us worship her directly as the Supreme Goddess.

If we do not do either of these, the Aruṇopaniṣad warns, that we become bound by the noose of Yama.

This warning is given in the Tattirīya Āraṇyaka 1.27.117 in the mantra which starts with the words 'apeta vīta'.

We will have a fallen position not only in the other world (after death) but also in this world. We will lose all our fame, prosperity and position in both the worlds.

Having warned us, like this the commentator quotes a famous passage from the Īśāvāsya Upaniṣat (9). The passage in translation means: Those who meditate on avidyā enter into pitch darkness.

Avidyā is explained as that which is opposite of Vidyā. This is further explained as that which is opposite to the path of knowledge.

In this connection the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣad quotes a passage from the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣat which says 'one should meditate on speech as a cow'.

Having quoted this text the commentator remarks that 'they are unknowers who meditate on the basis of superimposed ideas of this nature'.

In fact the present author of this book is not able to understand exactly what the commentator means here.

For all superficial purposes this appears to be a criticism of Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣat as well as the famous commentators of the Upaniṣat like Śankara. But the commentator of Aruṇopaniṣat would never try to criticise the tradition like this.

Perhaps the commentator wants to tell us that we should not unnecessarily superimpose ideas for the sake of superimposing. Superimposition should be resorted to only when it is absolutely necessary.

In the opinion of the commentator the Aruṇopaniṣat has come to a close with this mantra quoted and discussed in this Section.

Section 28

As remarked at the end of the last Section, the Aruṇopaniṣat has came to a close with mantra quoted and discussed in the previous Section.

Then what is the necessity of the mantra found in this Section (28)?

This mantra is found in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka and therefore the mantra is retained in the editions of the Aruṇopaniṣat along with the other mantras.

In a way, this mantra serves a very useful purpose. It is only in this mantra that a background of the Aruṇopaniṣat is revealed.

From this mantra only we are able to understand that the previous mantras which are now forming part of

Aruṇopaniṣat were revealed originally by a group of sages known as Pṛśnī sages.

So we understand that all the mantras of the Aruṇopaniṣat were proclaimed by these sages. This information is very useful to a student who is interested in knowing some external information about the Aruṇopaniṣat.

But as the commentator holds, this does not form part of the Aruṇopaniṣat as it is not a mantra of the Aruṇopaniṣat. It is only a concluding remark.

The commentator is unable to explain the syntactical connection of the words of this mantra.

The word 'ऋषिभिः' is in third case and therefore it should, according to Sanskrit grammar, govern only a passive verb. But the sentence has only an aiorist verb which cannot be syntactically conected with the subject of the sentence which is in Third case. Therefore the commentator gives a passive meaning to the word 'अदात्' as 'अदायि'.

OR, if we want to retain the word 'अदात्' with the word 'ऋषिभिः' then we will have to interpret the sentence as meaning 'the assembly of the entire sages along with the Pṛśnī sages said (अदात्) like this.

Both the interpretations are prefectly acceptable from all points of view.

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